No 46 JULY 1991 £1.80

ACE

ADVAN MP NMENT

- AMIGA
- PC
- ST
- MEGADRIVE
- GAMEBOY
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- SUPER FAMICOM

TRACKCAM 1
04

AMIGA & PC EXCLUSIVE

ROBOWARS!

Cyberfight and Robozone prepare for the Mechanoid Apocalypse!

PRETTY PICTURES!
From the Imagina Graphics Show

POWER!
The Top 50 industry Heavyweights Named!

VISION ON!
TV in your Face

PLUS 30 PAGES
Of Hard Info in the Pinks

WIN!
£600 of CD Goodies

EXCLUSIVE!
Heart Of China Review

30 PAGES OF REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS INCLUDING: JETFIGHTER 2, MYTH, HERO QUEST, LORDS OF CHAOS, LOGICAL, ROBOCOD, CHINTO'S REVENGE, ROBIN HOOD, F-ZERO, MONKEY ISLAND, TRIAL BY FIRE, STELLAR 7, METAL MUTANTS

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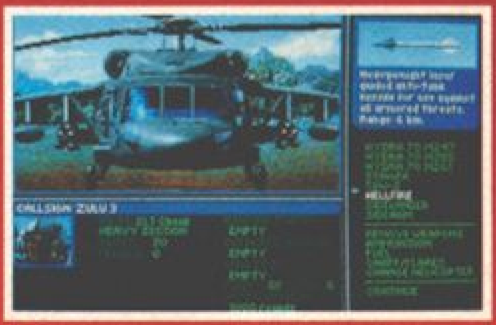
GUNSHIP 2000™

In 1986, MicroProse released Gunship, an Apache AH-64A attack helicopter simulation which sold copy after copy and won award after award. It was hailed as the definitive chopper simulation.

Five years later, after the success of Operation Desert Storm, MicroProse present Gunship 2000. High-tech air supremacy provided unmatchable military power. Now high-tech computer technology provides the untouchable chopper simulation.

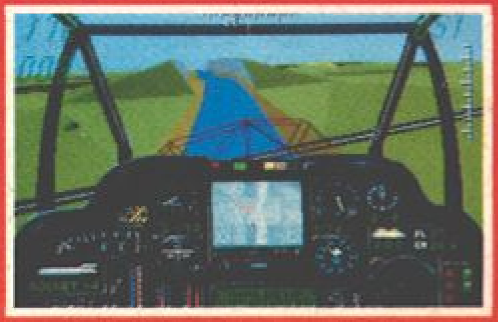
Tomorrow's Technology Today



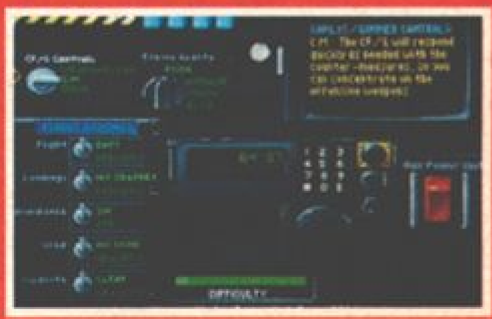
Gunship 2000 simulates an amazing seven of the US Army's most technologically advanced rotor craft. For each of hundreds of different missions the player considers the special capabilities of each helicopter type and selects a squad of five ships, and then designates state-of-the-art weaponry to each chopper. Its the first multi-copter simulation ever to reach the mass market.

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

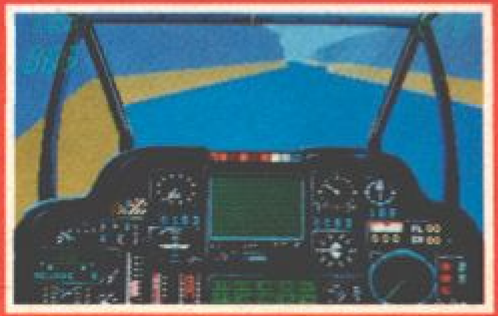
The action takes place in Central Europe and the Persian Gulf, each theatre containing three different arenas. Your crew members will increase in skill over time; your job is to make the best use of each crew member's abilities and to oversee and coordinate the battle tactics of the squad.



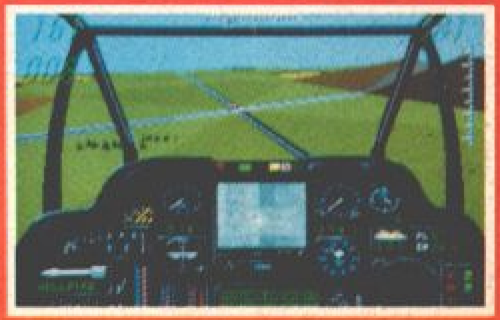
Topographical 3-D graphics show terrains with depressions, such as river banks and valleys, and elevations, like mountains and ridges, making low-altitude flight stunningly realistic. Each helicopter looks and handles just like the real thing.



There are a multitude of game options to choose from; training, single, and multiple helicopter missions, a campaign game, and in flight options allowing realistic or easy flight, landings, weather, and variable wind conditions.



A huge range of views allow you to see action from anywhere within the theatre of conflict. From within the cockpit you can see ahead, left and right, or you can watch from the top of the rotor shaft, via chase view, tacti-view, remote camera, 360° panorama, or ride-the-missile view.



With the added ability to call in artillery and fixed wing support when its available and needed, and a mission builder for designing and saving your own missions, Gunship 2000 offers you the complete state-of-the-art simulation of a frontline battlefield.

MICROPROSE™
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

Gunship 2000 will be available soon for IBM PC compatibles

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"All we ask is that we be left alone."

Jefferson Davis, claiming to translate the voices he heard from the aliens in his Megadrive.

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reviews

This issue carries more games reviews than wec could fit on the ST intro page! So, here's the full rundown...

ON COMPUTER AND CONSOLE *pages 50-83*

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68 **WARZONE** *Core*

ACE at Cannes. For games companies hoping to pick up some bargain properties, the pickings were good, but heaven alone knows what the games may be like... See page 37

RANK
15
0' 31"58
F-Zero on the Super Famicom. Trackside thrills 'n' spills on page 71.

Jetfighter 2. Arguably the best flying game ever created. See for yourself on Page 56.

POWER EXTREME!

Contrary to popular belief, the computer games industry is no longer controlled by a spotty oiks with high IQs and whizz-kid businessmen. Instead, a group of young men and women with more financial muscle than you would *believe* are deciding *right now* the games you will be buying and playing next Christmas.

So here, in another blistering ACE exclusive, we name the Top 50 industry powerbrokers and slot their functions into the complex jigsaw of games publishing.

Full report on pages 18,19,23,27,33,35 and 37.

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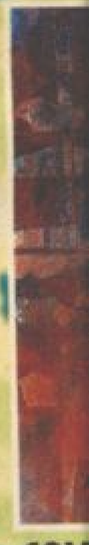

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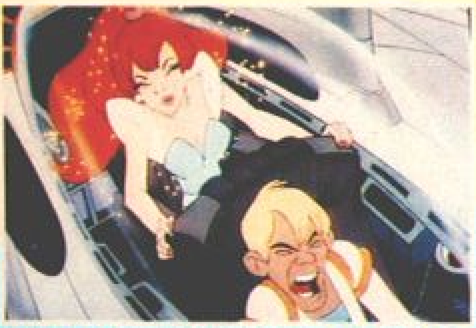


Anyone who thought the Laserdisk was dead would be wise to think again, since a German company is working on modifications to an existing system that will enable users to watch films, play games, listen to audio tracks and store data *all on the same system.* See page 34

HOT. DAMN HOT. The sun comes up, the day begins, and it won't be long before *we're* drinking it in. Fruit juices all round at the ACE office, since the heat is so intense. But it's not the Sun we have to thank for our *trés chaud* condition, it's being at the blistering white-hot laser-edge of computer entertainment that's giving us beady-brows. This issue we report on the *Revenge of the Laserdisk,* imagine what movie licences of the near future could turn out like, examine the phenomena of *The Robot in Games*, and report from Monte Carlo on the Imagina Graphics Show. And for readers with an interest in Industry shenanegins, we name the Top 50 figures in the business. And there's the usual excellent coverage of the latest games for *your* machine. Non-essential reading? We think not.

features

18 **POWER!**
In *another* ACE expose scenario, the top 50 players in the industry's power games are named!

22 **ACE AT THE MOVIES**
The beautiful people and RIk Haynes flocked to Cannes recently for the Film Festival and *my*! what a selection of titles there were on display. Imagine if they were turned into games...

25 **ROBOWARS SPECIAL**
Cyberfight and *Robozone* are robot games with a difference, *Robozone,* while opting for a more straightforward feel, promises all-out action blasting. *Cyberfight,* on the other hand features brand new graphics systems, build-em-yourself robots and a two-player punch-out option. Which will triumph?

32 **LASERDISK REVENGE!**
And you thought the Laserdisk was dead? Wrong! Read about this incredible new twist on technology and enter our free competition.

36 **LASER QUEST**
Real-life laser combat comes to Manchester.

39 **INCENTIVE**
We report from this year's computer trade show where the industry folk have been deciding what you'll be playing this Christmas.

42 **IMAGINA**
Strictly for pixophiles, this report from the recent graphics show in Monte Carlo will simply stun you!

Only available, of course, in another of our Exclusive competitions, is the chance for you to win Software Corner's Laser-Disk

WIN! WIN! WIN!

games system, complete with an interface for your Amiga, PC or ST, and a bundle of software.

Turn to Page 32

◀ Just one of the amazing images on show at the *Imagina Exhibition* last month For a full run-down on the very latest steps in the crazy world of graphics, turn to page 42.

REGULARS

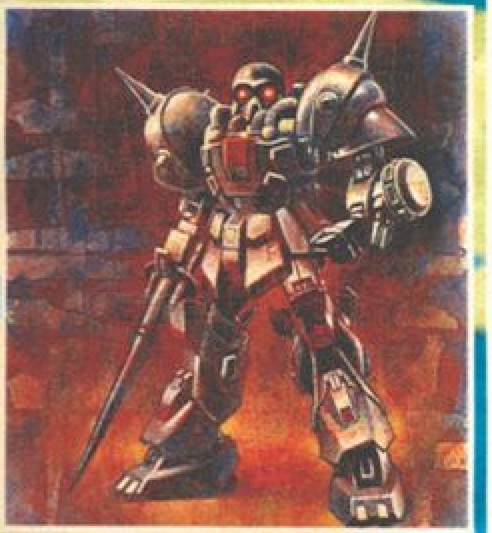
7 **ACE GAMES NEWS**
Lotus 2, Kick Off Player Manager, Floor 13, Choplifter 2, Base Wars and *Rockman World* oh, and an opportunity to Program For the Lord!

11 **ACE TECH NEWS**
The latest news of widgits, gizmos and events on the hardware scene.

15 **LETTERS**
Speak out!

84 **TRICKS'n'TACTICS**
Solutions, codes, cheats and hints for the best games of the moment.

88 **NEXT MONTH**
Far be it from us to blow our own, if you must, 'trumpet', but the next issue will be rather special.



COVER STORY

The robot has always been a popular brand of hero, from the earliest games like *Robotron* and *Alien 8*, through action-packed classics like *Android 2* and *Robocop* to modern day outings *Robocop 2 & 3* and the forthcoming *Terminator 2*.

Here we examine the genre and in particular preview two giant robot games, Mirrorsoft's *Robozone* and Electronic Arts' *Cyberfight*.

Read all about it on page 25.

JULY 1991

PLAYER
Manager
2
TM

by Dino Dini

PLAYER MANAGER 2 IS EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED AT THE END OF THE YEAR OR EARLY NEXT YEAR.

Many thanks for the support and constructive criticism that so many of you extended to our products. Player Manager remains to date perhaps the only real time soccer management game. Now Dino is busy writing Player Manager 2 and the draft specifications are detailed below. If you have any suggestions that would enhance the depth or playability of the Player Manager 2, please write to us.

- One M. byte minimum memory. An additonal disk drive may also be required.
- Full implementation of KICK OFF 2 and FINAL WHISTLE wherever possible. A double tactics editor will also be included.
- Three division leagues with 64 teams. Two Domestic and two Europeans Cup Competitions.
- A young player must be nursed to the first team place otherwise he may burn out quickly.
- Numerous factors can cause player stress which will play a very important part in his individual match performance.
- Captain appointment. Man of the match, Manager of the month and the year awards.
- Manager performance to be put under tighter scrutiny. i.e. failure to get promotion after awhile or maintain the position at the top may lead to being sacked.
- Introduction of some really astute and high spending computer managers. A Player Manager may also get an offer to manager another team in the league.
- Facility to see the stats. of every player in the league and on the transfer market. Only transfer listed players will have price indication.
- Option to bid for a player not transfer listed and overseas players. Introduction of Scouts.
- Much improved match report with information on scoring attempts, keeper saves & possession in each half of the match.
- International caps awarded and also compulsory retirement of players reaching maturity.
- Improved financial structure. Multi-players option.
- Improved coaching with facility to concentrate on an individual player.
- Invisible management stats. influenced by individual player and team performance.
- Referees, pitches and wind may be implemented. Pre-season friendlies.

SUGGESTIONS THAT CANNOT BE IMPLEMENTED

- Enhanced graphics or facility to edit player names. Both of these take up too much memory.

Each letter received until 15th July 1991 will go into a draw. First 10 letters drawn will receive an autographed copy of Player Manager 2 and next 10 letters drawn will receive £10 record tokens.
Now is your chance to help us create a game you want. Take it and you may also win a prize.

Please address the envelope to the address below:

ANCO

PLAYER MANAGER 2, ANCO SOFTWARE LTD.,
UNIT 7 MILLSIDE IND. ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT, DA1 5BH

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NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES

Spurs wins the FA Cup and Rik Haynes gets hooked on bionic baseball...

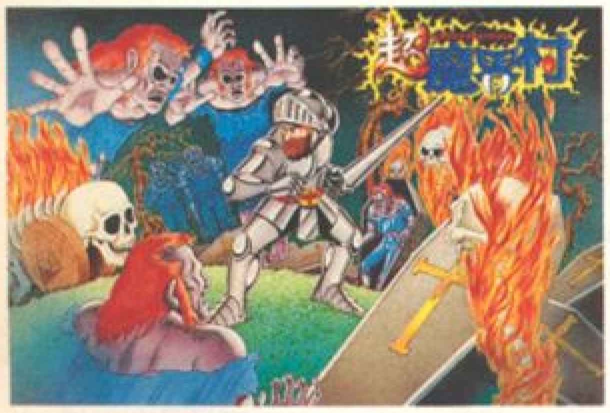
Commodore claims there are nearly 250 developers in the USA and Europe creating software for the recently launched CDTV. The manufacturer is predicting sales of 80,000 machines in the UK alone during the first year of release.

Chohmakaimura

You may not recognise this Japanese name but we bet the pics ring a bell. Sure thing, Capcom is working on another action game with ghosts, goblins and ghouls. Only this time, the Japanese company's efforts are purely being directed towards the Nintendo Super Famicom. Video games' favourite knight, who has a habit of losing his armour, is back in another adventure!

The scenario goes like this. People are living in peace after the disastrous Great Fire four years ago. The war-torn castles are all but rebuilt and the town centre is a hive of activity. However, their happiness comes to an abrupt end as they sustain a fierce attack from a monster family in the sky. Innocent citizens are killed and the Princess is trapped. The kingdom awaits the chance to again get drunk on the great wine of peace. Taking the role of Ahsah you have three chances to put things right and destroy the monster's world.

Chohmakaimura will be available in August for the quest-drenching sum of ¥8,500 (approximately £34). An early pre-production preview of the game received a huge thumbs-up from visitors to the first Super Famicom Show in Tokyo last month.



Ghosts 'n' goblins make their way to the Super Famicom. Special thanks to Fergus McGovern of Probe Software for supplying the visuals. Good luck with *Alien III*!

Lotus Turbo Challenge 2

Get your motor running because Gremlin is readying the eagerly-awaited follow-up to the racing *Lotus Turbo Challenge*.

You can drive both a Lotus Espirit Turbo SE and a Elan Turbo SE depending on which stage you're on. The sporty Elan made history in 1962 when Lotus created a car that became a leader for a generation. Then, 25 years later, the designers went back to their drawing boards – or CAD packages – to create a compact, two-seater sports car. "You have never driven a car like the Elan because there has never been a car like it," proclaims Lotus.

Instead of the track-based play of the original, *Lotus Turbo Challenge 2* is divided into individual stages which will also include selectable routes and different roadside objects and tunnels. Test drivers can try their luck in November.

Amnios

A Big Nasty thing is living in space, eating everything that it comes across. Some brainy people built an army to fight the Big Nasty. The army kicked butt. The army's little ships went from planet to planet trying to kill the Big Nasty. If this sounds like another scenario for a shoot'em-up, don't worry, it is!

***Amnios* is an 'explosive encounter with ten living planets of the worst kind' asserts publisher Psygnosis. The game has been coded by Pete Lyons and Paul Frewin, two ex-Microdeal veterans previously responsible for such titles as *Goldrunner, Leatherneck* and *Tetra Quest*. You'll be able to meet the Big Nasty next month on Amiga.**

Player Manager

Fresh from the chart-busting success of The *Final Whistle*, Dino Dini and Anco are hard at work on the sequel to *Player Manager*. Anco's boss Anil Gupta has set his sights high for *Player Manager 2*, saying: "I want to give people a game that will stand the test of time. I want them to say, 'Yes, this is the definitive football management game'."

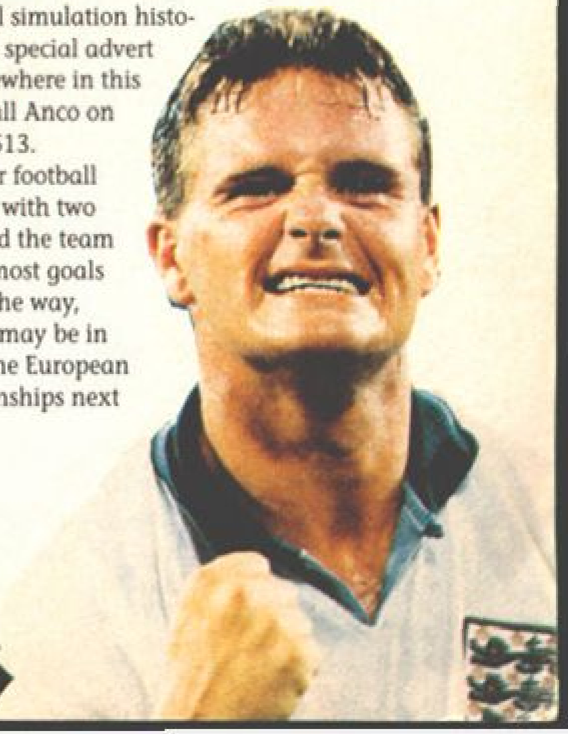
To help them achieve their daunting task, the guys are looking for innovative ideas to inject into the game from experts in the field... that's you my friend! Anco isn't simply looking for any cosmetic changes to *Player Manger*, Dino Dini wants hard gameplay ideas.

"We are improving the finesse of it," remarks Gupta, "We're going for a multi-player option where at least two players can play simultaneously. People can bid for each others players and European teams will be playing as well. It's all compressed into three divisions. You must nurse your players properly otherwise they will just burn out. You also need experienced players to support the novices."

"We've learnt so much from *Player Manager*, what all the failings were. The flair of the player will be important and cost you a lot of money. Managers will be strictly monitored, you could be sacked for a poor performance."

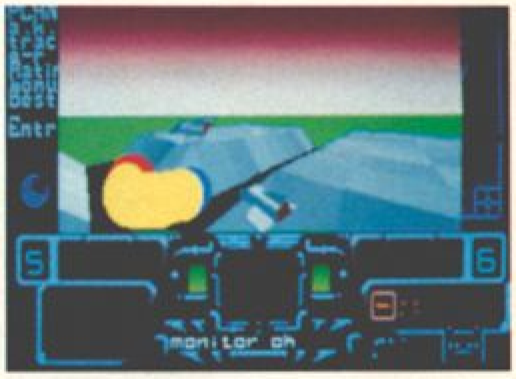
The only bad news is that *Player Manager 2* requires 1Mb of memory and extra disk drive. At least there will be a full implementation of *Kick Off 2* wherever possible.

For more details of how you can get involved in football simulation history, see the special advert found elsewhere in this issue or call Anco on 0322 292513. Remember football is a game with two halves and the team with the most goals wins! By the way, *Kick Off 3* may be in time for the European Championships next year...



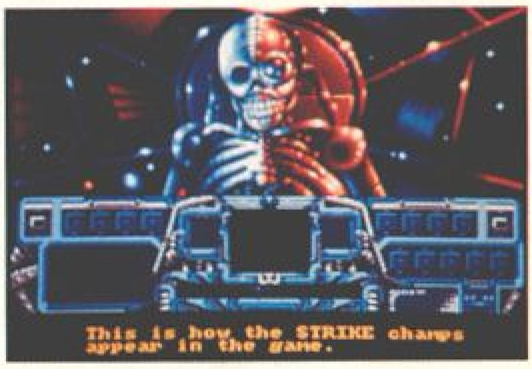
'Looks like the only option left for Gazza!'

Strike Command



Far in the future, the public's thirst for violent sport has resulted in whole planetary systems being turned into combat arenas. Top human and alien pilots compete in a series of high speed, high death rate duels, with only the most skilled and cunning warriors standing a chance of winning the championship.

Written by the same team responsible for Millennium's earlier fight-'n'-flight hit *ThunderStrike*, *Strike Command* employs a similar trailing camera viewpoint of the solid-3D action, but has an even higher death and destruction quotient thanks to the ability to buy a huge range of weapons and ship upgrades with cash won in the arenas. Can you make the grade as the Universe's top gamer? Find out when *Strike Command* hits


This is how the STRIKE champs appear in the game.

Imagine the Death Star trench but a thousand times deadlier and you'll get some idea of the challenge this arena poses.

Ever heard of losing face? Strike Command competitors have the possibility of that fate - literally.

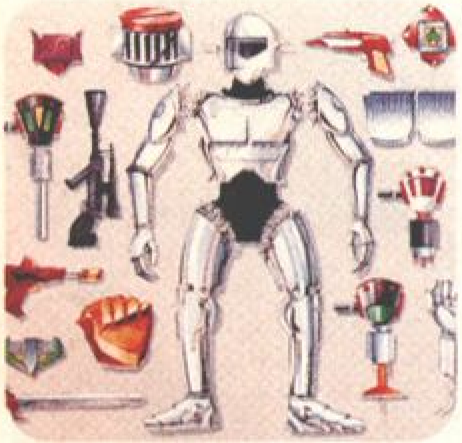
The creators of the HeroQuest *boardgame have developed* Space Crusade, *another role-playing epic, this time set in space. Your space marines kick the ass of alien hordes aboard giant space ships. Available on all formats in November courtesy of Gremlin.*

Base Wars

What do you get when you mix baseball with bionics? The latest in Ultra Games' *Cyber Stadium* Series. In *Base Wars,* the baseball heroes really are made of metal. Hulking mechanical he-men resembling humans, half-ton tanks and unidentified fielding objects. And they're programmed to pound, punch and blast it out for base possession. Ouch.

This is a whole new brawl game. Select your bionic ball clubs, set the robot rosters, and go circuit to circuit in single games or a tortuous 10 game pennant chase.

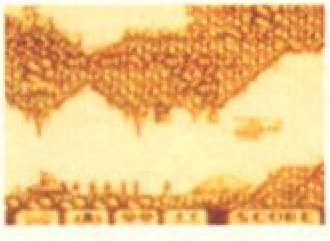
Beat, cut, thrust, kick, spin to attack or engage the special combination attack sequence. Just remember you have to play ball as well! And don't forget to duck when the shrapnel starts flying. If the battles get too brutal, just save the teams and stats for another day. Fortunately, you can cash in your Cyber League winnings for parts, repairs and a wild assortment of metal-mashing weapons. Rexy the Riveter is waiting for you in the parts shop. There are four different models of mechanical maulers, each with specialised circuitry for playing a specific position. Choose from 22 different protective and offensive items including iron gloves, hyper engines, laser swords and more. Will *Base Wars* become the world's favourite bashtime?



The Secret of Monkey Island

You can't keep a bad ghost pirate down. The Evil Ghost Pirate LeChuck was apparently only slightly fizzled by that bottle of root beer in the first game, so he's about the make a comeback later this year in *The Secret of Monkey Island II.* Lucasfilm Games and US Gold reckon the pirate spector is really mad now and out for revenge.

The Secret of Monkey Island was a hugely successful graphic adventure much admired by fans of the genre. Its story focused on an aspiring pirate, Guybrush Threepwood, who sets out to find his fortune among brash buccaneers, voodoo priestesses and murderous ghosts. This release had many interface refinements to Lucasfilm Games' game engine, and incorporated scaling 3D animation and other special visual effects. Thinking of 1992 – and all that – Lucasfilm Games even produced versions of the text in German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish and Finnish. Japanese, Chinese and Korean gamesters also have the chance to solve the devilish secret.



Choplifter II

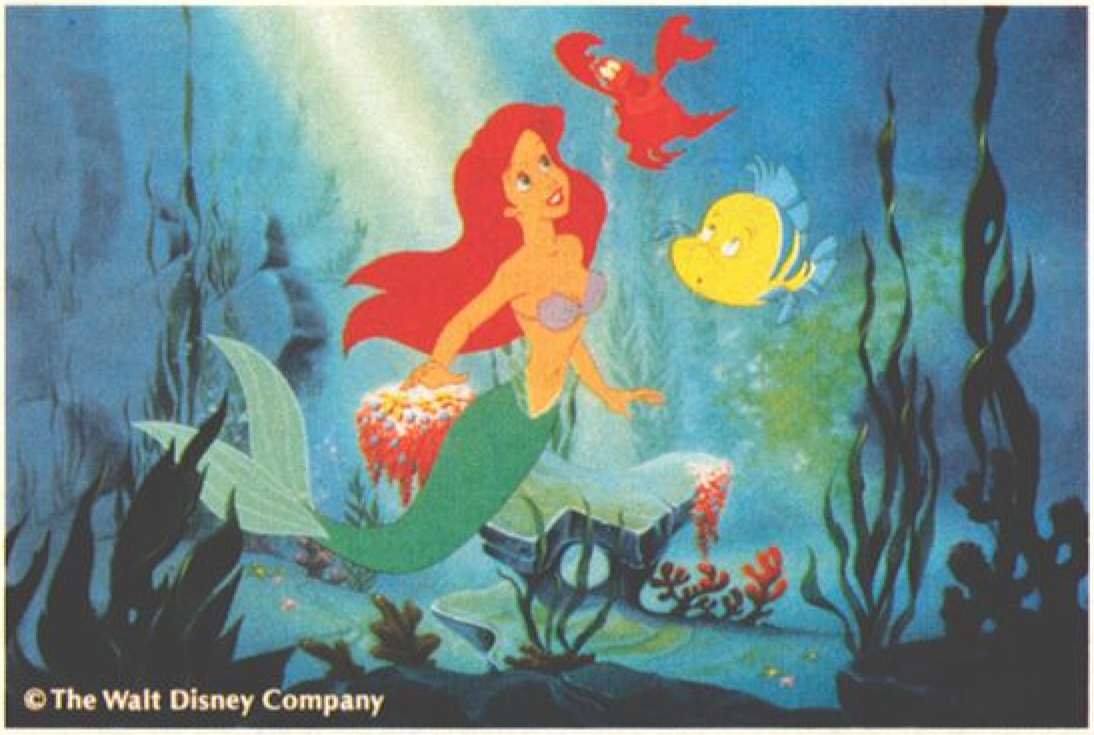
Not many shoot'em-ups can claim a link to real life. *Choplifter* is a notable exception. The failed attempt by American Special Forces to rescue the US hostages held in Iran during 1980 prompted Broderbund Software to release a game where the player not only had to blast away enemy tanks and planes, they also had to liberate and evacuate little people held prisoner in American embassies. *Choplifter* became an instant hit on the first wave of home microcomputers like the Apple II and Atari 800. Soon it was regarded a classic. Now JVC Musical Industries in Japan has revealed the Gameboy adaption of *Choplifter.*

An epic 15-stage romp, *Choplifter II* is available today for ¥3,400 (£13.60). The world is still in a war-torn condition. The environment is getting worse every day. Now, pursued by world-wide destruction, the most urgent task has become the speedy rescue of prisoners of war. You must find the prisoners who can be taken and revive them. With the most accurate weaponry and the latest in attack helicopters, the AH90 Comanche, you fly over extremely dangerous places like dense jungle and heaving seas. For the mission you have flame-throwers and missiles in order to increase your strike capability. However, reigned against you

Feminists and good taste beware! Those programming pervies at Sierra On-Line are devising yet another sleazy Leisure Suit Larry *game.*

Even worse, the next title will be Leisure Larry 5, *so what's happened to #4? "At the end of* Leisure Suit Larry 3, *he supposedly lost his memory, so he's trying to find out what happened in* Leisure Suit Larry 4," *indicates Peter Jones at Sierra On-Line. "It will be an absolute monster product."*

PC players should look out for it later in the year – along with the sequel to Red Baron. *ACE will have more in the next issue...*


© The Walt Disney Company

DEFENDERS OF DYNATRON CITY

Watch out Superman, here comes Jet Headstrong. This atomic-age superhero could cause your console to melt down. Defenders of Dynatron City, *the latest video game from Lucasfilm Games and JVC Musical Industries, introduces the wackiest bunch of super-heroes ever seen. Dynatron City looks a lot like New York during the 1940s... except that it's the site of the world's first atomic-powered sewage treatment plant. What better place for the toxic team to battle Dr Mayhem and his bunch of villainous bruisers?*

The Little Mermaid

Under the sea no-one can hear you scream. Based on the recent animated feature film from the Walt Disney Studios, which in turn was inspired by a popular East European fable, *The Little Mermaid* has been set into silicon by Capcom in Japan.

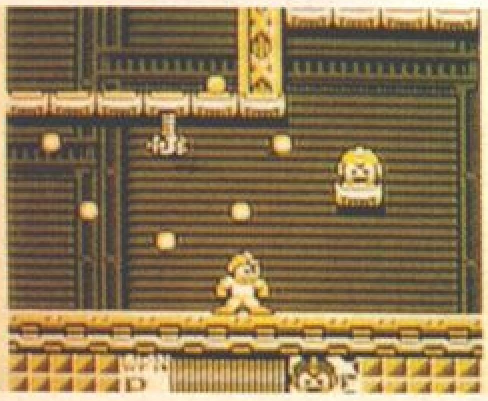
This love story tells the tale of a pretty mermaid who, after saving a handsome prince from drowning, trades her voice for legs. In order to start nagging him, she needs to get that big screen kiss from the bashful bachelor. Like the movie, the video game is full of cute characters and gameplay. It certainly makes a change from all those megadeath blast'em-ups currently playing on most consoles. Keep a special eye out for the cool cajun Crayfish. *The Little Mermaid* is out next month on NES for ¥5,800 (around £23.50), more versions are likely to follow later in the year.

Fans of the French puzzler Skweek *from Loriciels should be happy to hear the game is now available on the Sega Gamegear hand-held console courtesy of Victor Musical Industries in Japan. This one meg cart utilises the bright colourful graphics of the Gamegear to the full. Skweek costs ¥3,800 (about £15).*

Floor 13

What a Le Carré on! *Floor 13*, a game of subterfuge and corruption in high places, puts the player in the hot seat of an ultra-secret Government agency. Known only to the PM and a handful of ministers, the agency's job is to keep the Government high in the polls by covering up damaging scandals and 'eliminating' anti-Government voices.

Floor 13 mixes Le Carré style intrigues with resources management gameplay to create an absorbing and refreshingly cynical atmosphere of moral ambiguity and double dealing. Written by David Eastman with graphics by Carl Cropley, both of *Conflict* fame, the game features a impressive plot driver that can keep track of up to 100 unrelated scenarios. Aimed squarely at the 'mature' player, *Floor 13* is due from Virgin this September. Definitely one to watch - while watching your back!



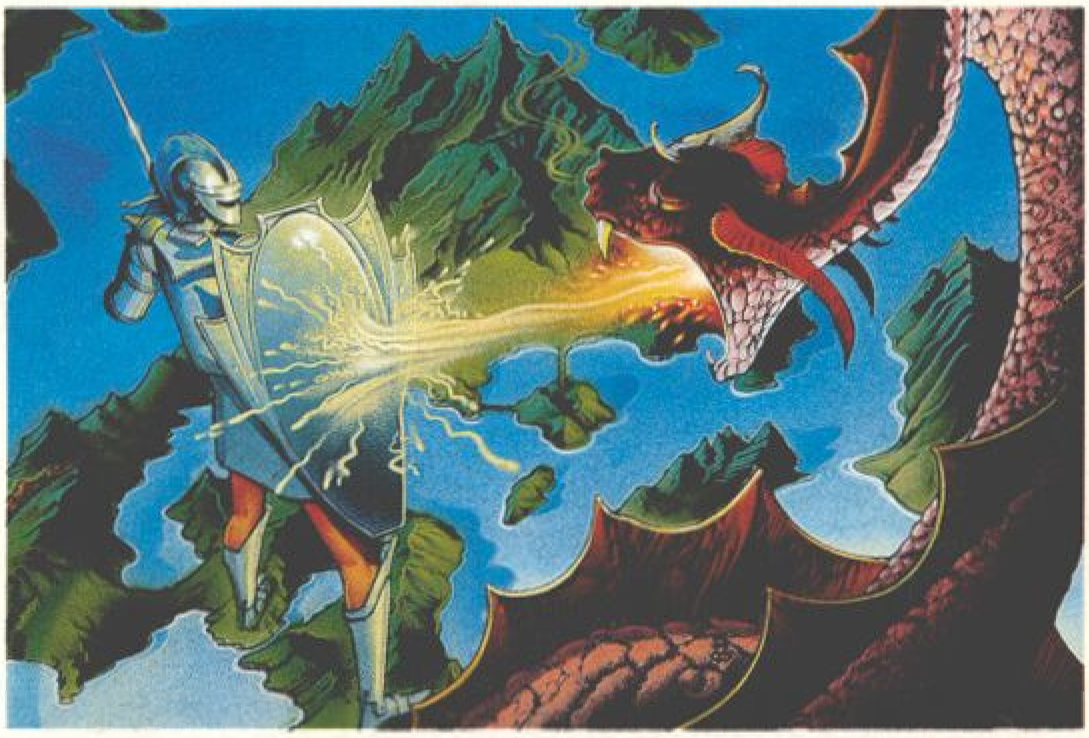
Rockman World

By popular request, Capcom is bringing its favourite character to Gameboy for the second time. *Rockman World* is a two megabit cartridge with our spacehero up against more Mad Doctors and rebel robots out to rule the universe. Poor Megaman can't count on the help of his robodog Rush in this daredevil sequel.

Capcom has sold over one million copies of the *Megaman* series. Started back in 1982 by Kenzo Tsujimoto, a veteran of the Japanese video game industry and founder of Irem (producers of *R-Type*), Capcom is designer and marketer of games for home and coin-operated video arcade games. With over 240 game designers, the firm is ranked in the top three of more than 60 third-party licensees that design and market home video games for the NES and Gameboy.

In the past nine years, Capcom has given us *Commando, Ghosts 'n Goblins, 1942, Bionic Commandos, Street Fighter, Forgotten Worlds* and *Strider*. US Gold has experienced a long and fruitful relationship with Capcom by converting its games onto home computer.

Success, according to Capcom, lies in the company's ability to develop high quality video games that appeal to broad audiences and age groups. Another future direction is to bring its design skills to the USA. Currently Capcom has an American design team working with and studying the intricacies of game programming from the Japanese 'masters' in Osaka. These digital diddlers should help keep Capcom at the forefront of video game design.



Will this game light your Faria ?

Flag is coming from the team that created Lost Patrol *for Ocean. You must do battle to steal the flag from the next village and return it to your own abode before they get your flag to theirs. Gremlin suggests this game features a giant isometric-3D playing area. Out on Amiga, ST and PC in November.*

Some details have emerged about the new Indiana Jones *game currently in development in the States.* Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis *is the first Indy adventure designed originally for the personal computer rather than the movies. Everyone's favourite professor is in a world-wide race with the Nazis to discover whether the mythical lost city of Atlantis exists and what powerful magic it possesses. More next month...*

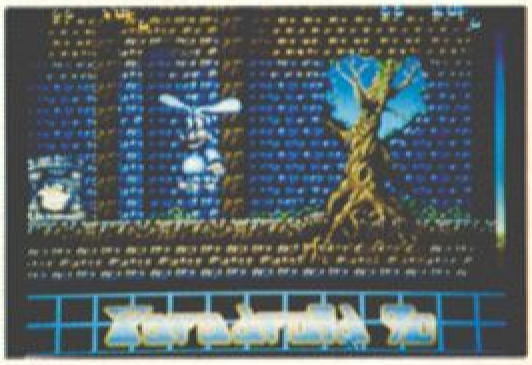
Faria

Only the bravest video warriors would enter *Faria: The Land of Mystery and Danger*. This RPG/action adventure hybrid for the NES comes from Nexsoft Corporation, the American subsidiary of ASCII Corporation, publisher of LOGiN magazine in Japan.

"Action adventure gamers will thrive on the hack-slashing fun of battling hundreds of monsters," expects Nexsoft. "This title is destined to set new ground in adventure gaming with a thrilling plot, along with over 70 different items, weapons, armour and magic."

Based in the Californian town of Cypress, Nexsoft has already released products ranging from the complex *Wizardry* RPG series to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Christmas cards. Faria out, man.

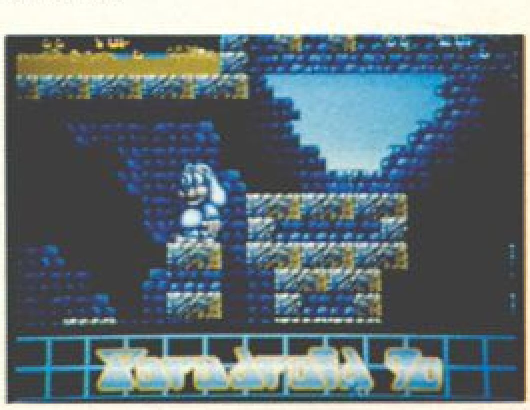
If you're into athletics, you should be in sunny Sheffield from July 14-25 to enjoy the World Student games. These will be the most important days in the town's 700 year history. Contact 0742 720100 for more.



Fire and Ice

Remember Pugsy? Graftgold obviously do, because the hero of their forthcoming platform escapade bears an uncanny resemblance to the adorable canine star of the Betty Boop cartoons. Some scurrilous dog... er... person has kidnapped a litter of puppies, and it's up to the floppy-eared cutey to rescue them. Armed only with the ability to spit ice cubes, this epic quest takes the daredevil doggie from his icy homeland through eight multidirectionally-scrolling levels to a final battle with an arch baddy on a volcanic vista of lava and pumice.

Fire and Ice is being written by Graftgold's in-house code supremo Andrew Braybrook (responsible for such recent classics as *Rainbow Islands* and *Paradroid 90*) and looks unlikely to damage his reputation as a creator of finest-quality software. Could this be the game to knock Mario from his pedestal? Find out when the *Fire and Ice* is released this Winter by Mirrorsoft.



Program For Jesus

Evangelsoft of Kingston have launched a programming competition to find the Best Christian Software Writers of 1991. The firm, dedicated to spreading the Good Word through 'Christian computer games for Church and family', are offering prizes for the best examples of holy coding across a number of age ranges, on all popular machines. All manner of software will be eligible for entry, although shoot-em-ups will probably be dimly viewed.

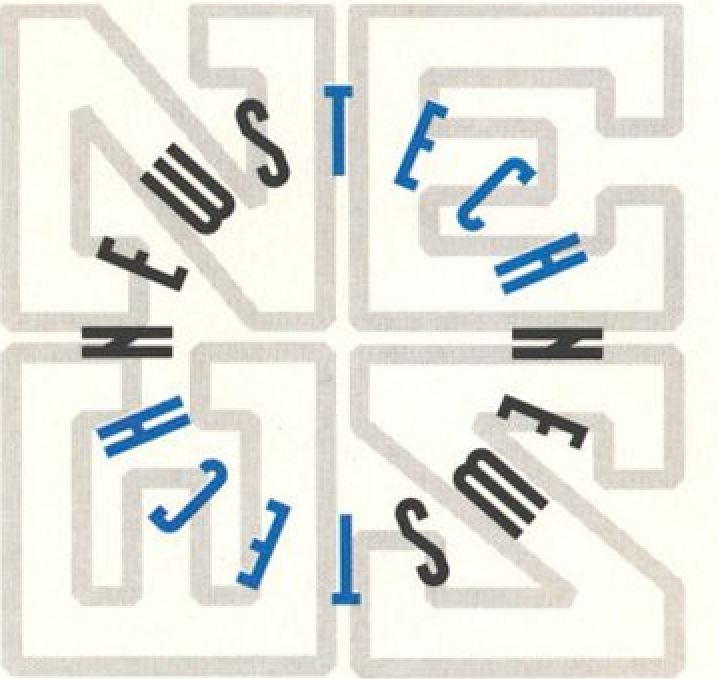
Please don't send your entries to ACE. Instead, mail them to:

The Bible Software Competition,
Evangeltrust,

Civilisation

From the co-founder of Microprose, *Civilisation* appears to be Sid Meier's answer to the award-winning *Populous* and *Powermonger* strategy games from Bullfrog and Electronic Arts. This revered game designing genius even made Train Spotting trendy with *Railroad Tycoon*, so great things are expected for this ramble though the ages.

It all begins back in 4000 BC, you must develop an entire civilisation from a small nomadic tribe, balancing such issues as economics, politics and defence. The playing area is set on a map of the real world or in new terrain on a computer-generated area. A game may be played in its entirety for five to six thousand years or for a specific 100 year period. Along the way you'll encounter historical figures such as Napoleon or Ghengis Khan. A novel Civilopedia in incorporated, giving definitions and illustrations of the terms and concepts used throughout the game. *Civilisation* is scheduled for an autumn release on IBM PC-compatibles for the princely sum of £39.99, all major graphics and sound boards will be supported.



Electra (021 625 3388) has released a new range of accessories for the Gameboy including the Illuminator (£11.99) and Gamelight (£9.99) lightpacks allowing you to play in the dark, amplifier with integral speakers (£13.99), 'Magnifier' (£7.99) for poor-sighted gamesplayers, and 'ski-gear design' carrycase (£12.99).

The Doors get digital as Rik Haynes ventures into freespace...

Beyond The Stars

Do you fancy yourself as the next Luke Skywalker? LucasArts Entertainment Company launched a thrilling theme park ride in Tokyo last month that puts even the *Star Wars* movies to shame!

UCC Star-Port 2045 is the latest brainchild of George Lucas, the movie genius behind the *Star Wars* trilogy. For ¥1,600 (the equivalent of £6.50) space adventurers get the computer-generated ride of their lives. A spokesperson says it's a 'Hyperreal Experience'.

Details are scarce, but Star-Port uses something called 3D Scope graphics and Lucasfilm's THX sound system to produce stereo sounds better than most cinemas. Some of the amazing visuals were created by LucasArt's Industrial Light & Magic, the Oscar-winning movie special effects team. No European launch for Star-Port is planned at present.

Legendary movie production house ILM is now getting into theme park rides. Will video games be next? Pic courtesy of LOGIN magazine.

Liquid Crystal Clothes

What's going to be the next fab thing to wear to your favourite nightclub? How about clothes that change colour with temperature? Groovy, baby.

British chemists at Merck have devised a heat sensitive liquid crystal ink which can be used in cyberfashion. Thermochromic clothes are a natural progression from Merck's 10-year research into this technology. It's even used on wine labels to show the correct temperature to serve champagne.

"The chameleon-like fabrics change in colour from black, right through the spectrum from red to violet as the clothes come into contact with either body heat or any external heat source," reveals Dr Martin Pellat, Advanced Materials Business Manager for Merck's Industrial Chemicals Division.

ACE wonders what happens if you have sweaty armpits? Yuk!

Holographic Time Travel

You could be in for a visual shock when you visit your local arcades thanks to Sega Enterprises, USA. This American subsidiary of the Japanese coin-op giant has developed a new video game system incorporating holographic graphics pulled off a laserdisc. The breathtaking 3D utilises a novel optical system licensed from a Southern Californian company specialising in holography.

Sega's premier Hologram game, *Time Traveller*, has you controlling the movements of real people instead of computer generated sprites. "Players will experience the illusion of dictating the script and storyline before their very eyes," promises Sega. You simply punch, shoot, jump and duck your way around a fantasy journey through time. *Time Traveller* will be followed by a whole series of Hologram games.

The whole concept unsurprisingly received a phenomenal reception at the recent ACME (American Coin Machine Exposition) in Las Vegas, especially since the cost of a Hologram coin-op is 'very reasonable' – whatever that means. Sega Europe hopes to start shipping the machine in mid-July.

Is Sega finally dragging coin-operated video games into the 21st century? Find out next month when ACE brings you an exclusive report from California and Japan. So watch this freespace! In the meantime, turn to page 32 and discover another laserdisc revelation...

Master of Sounds

Why waste your time with timid audio when you could boost your PC with def sounds? Oregon-based Covox, USA has designed and manufactured the specification-heavy Sound Master II soundboard.

"The new Sound Master provides the highest standards in sound quality and supports features that blows away anything else anywhere near its price range (£179.95 plus VAT)," asserts the unbiased President of Covox, Mark Stewart.

Sound Master II boasts full Ad-Lib compatibility, DMA digitiser with a high sampling rate, MIDI interface, internal speaker support and voice recognition software. It also comes complete with MIDI cables, speaker, digital graphics-based sound editor, direct-to-disk recording and playback software (for long sound files) and PC-Lyra, a music composing program. Contact Covox Europe on 0983 864674 for further details.

MASTER II
SOUND

Wired For Sound

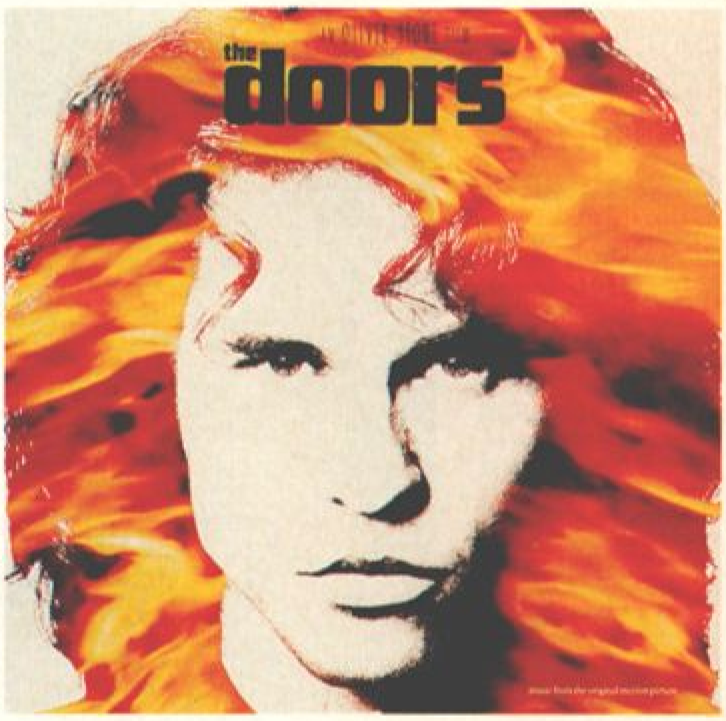
British big screens will soon have equally impressive sounds to accompany the next Schwarzenegger blockbuster. Visitors to the West Thurrock UCI multiplex cinema in Essex are enjoying better quality film soundtracks than most West End London venues.

Oliver Stone's music-movie tribute to sixties band *The Doors* has been chosen to launch Kodak's Cinema Digital Sound (CDS) into Britain. This technically advanced sound system provides digital six-channel audio comparable to the results of compact disc recordings. The sixth channel has deep bass and special effects blasting out in all directions. A spokesperson claims CDS touches the outer limits of the human ear.

Punters can be fooled into thinking the movie is 'surrounding' them, thus creating an extra sense of realism. Perhaps listeners even believe the boozing Jim Morrison is puking-up right behind them during *The Doors* biopic?

Kodak spent two years developing CDS in-conjunction with Optical Radiation Corporation of Azusa, California. Lasers are used to actually 'digitise' optical soundtracks directly onto celluloid. Your local cinema needs to spend around £15,000 and a couple of days installing CDS. So far, European cinematic connoisseurs have had to travel to Brussels or Munich to break the sound barrier.

What is every wannabe city planner wearing this summer? A SimCity World Tour T-shirt of course! Maxis is also selling SimCity and SimEarth posters to enhance your playspace. Get more details by writing to Maxis, 953 Mountain View Drive, Suite 113, Lafayette, California 94549-3729, USA.



Be A Smarty Pants

How much do you really know about toys, then? Do you know what keeps a ten-year-old quiet or a baby bounce? Have you ever wondered which toys really help your child to learn or how to ensure the toys you buy are safe?

The answers could lie in 'A Parent's Guide to Learning Through Play' from Vtech Electronics, a toy company – surprise, surprise – that specialises in educational toys.

Vtech says the guide contains a wealth of information on the different stages in a child's development and how to choose the right toy for the right age. It also covers the difference between a learning aid and other toys and offers advice on toy safety from RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).

Just send a SAE to Vtech at 'Learning Through Play', Vtech, PO Box 480, London SW9 9TH.

How old to you have to be before you can complete Super Mario Bros? Answers on a postcard to...

SMARTY PANTS

Virus Attack Shirts !

So what exactly is a Virus Attack shirt? Clothes for cyberpunks, we suppose. Over to designers Jo Simms and Bim Jackson at Flaw One for their explanation.0000 ...

"We work with digital viral strains and unstable networking to positively contaminate art design data."

Hmm, yes. Jo and Bim claim they've been influenced by the data landscapes and virus work of American artist Jean Sobieski.

"Working with virus infected text and graphics and deliberately corrupted files, we let the viral strains run riot in our painting software. As a result, Flaw One designs are contaminated beyond recognition."

That's enough of this. If you're interested in Virus Attack Art or Retro ReVo Shirts contact Flaw One on 0225 312350. You'll even get a free leaflet with each shirt giving you news and more info on the 'cutting edge of techno-art'. Hurrah.

Multimedia Visits Palm Springs

Following the agreement to create a multimedia standard for IBM PC-compatible computers, Tandy has unveiled a new range of MPC (Multimedia PC) machines.

The veteran American electronics maker and retailer launched its first MPC line-up at last month's Demo '91 conference in Palm Springs, California. Each Tandy MPC is equipped with a CDR-1000 internal CD-ROM drive, 512K Video RAM, audio circuitry, 3.5-inch floppy disk drive, mouse and multimedia extensions. You also get a minimum system (286 running at 16MHz, 2MB RAM and 40Mb hard disk) costing $2,599 right up to a deluxe $5,499 model (33MHz 386, 4Mb RAM, 105Mb hard disk).

Tandy is also supplying internal and external CD-ROM players for $799.95 and $899.95 respectively. These upgrade kits supposedly convert a standard PC into an MPC.

Hopefully you'll be able to buy any MPC-software with the confidence of that it will run on your own set-up. Integrating digitised video, audio, graphics and text, multimedia software is becoming increasingly popular in the business, education and consumer sectors of computing. Numerous hardware and software companies – including Sony, Philips, Matsushita and Fujitsu – believe multimedia is the next step forward in interactive entertainment. The potential is only beginning to be realised after many years of hype. We'll have to wait and see if it succeeds. MPC is a step forward but it could end up becoming the MSX of the nineties!

Tandy's first five MPC systems should be shipping in the States as you read this. The company has yet to announce price or availability details for Europe. Let's hope users don't have to wait too long, or pay too high a price, for the privilege of MPC 'reassurance'.

Set in the
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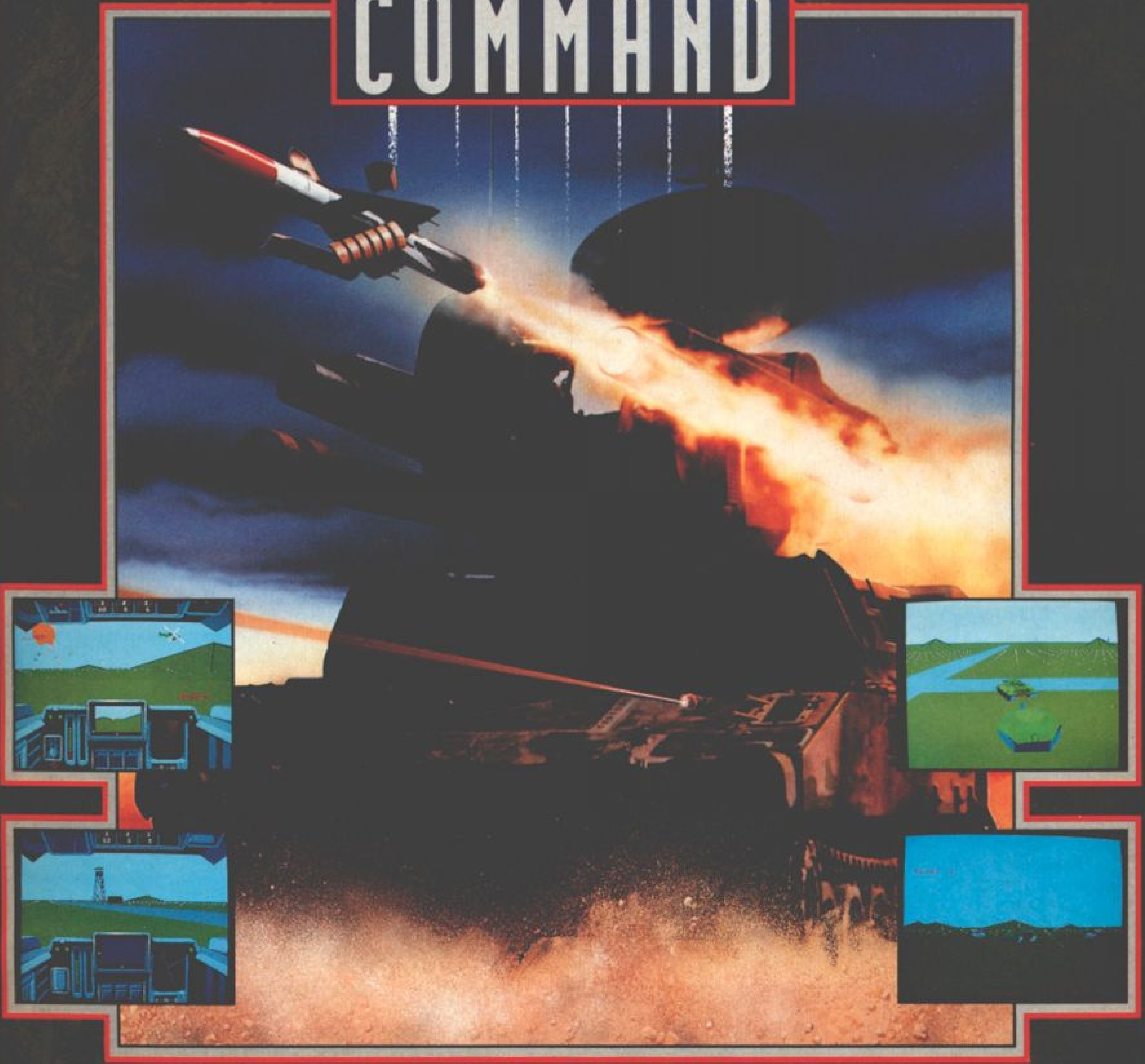
BATTLE COMMAND



FIRST INTO BATTLE ... ... LAST TO LEAVE

Set in the future, in which you control a "Mauler" Assault Tank in one of 16 missions, in a war fought between two dominant races of the New World. Such are the defensive capabilities of the opposing armies that any offensive moves must entail "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory and armed with the most advanced weaponry. Select your mission and the armoury you will require. The 360 radar sweep, in and out of cockpit views and area maps showing terrain, and complete theatre of operations, all combine to give a full picture of the battle as you strive for victory in a 3D arena where tactics go hand in hand with lightning reflexes and a true-grit determination

ocean

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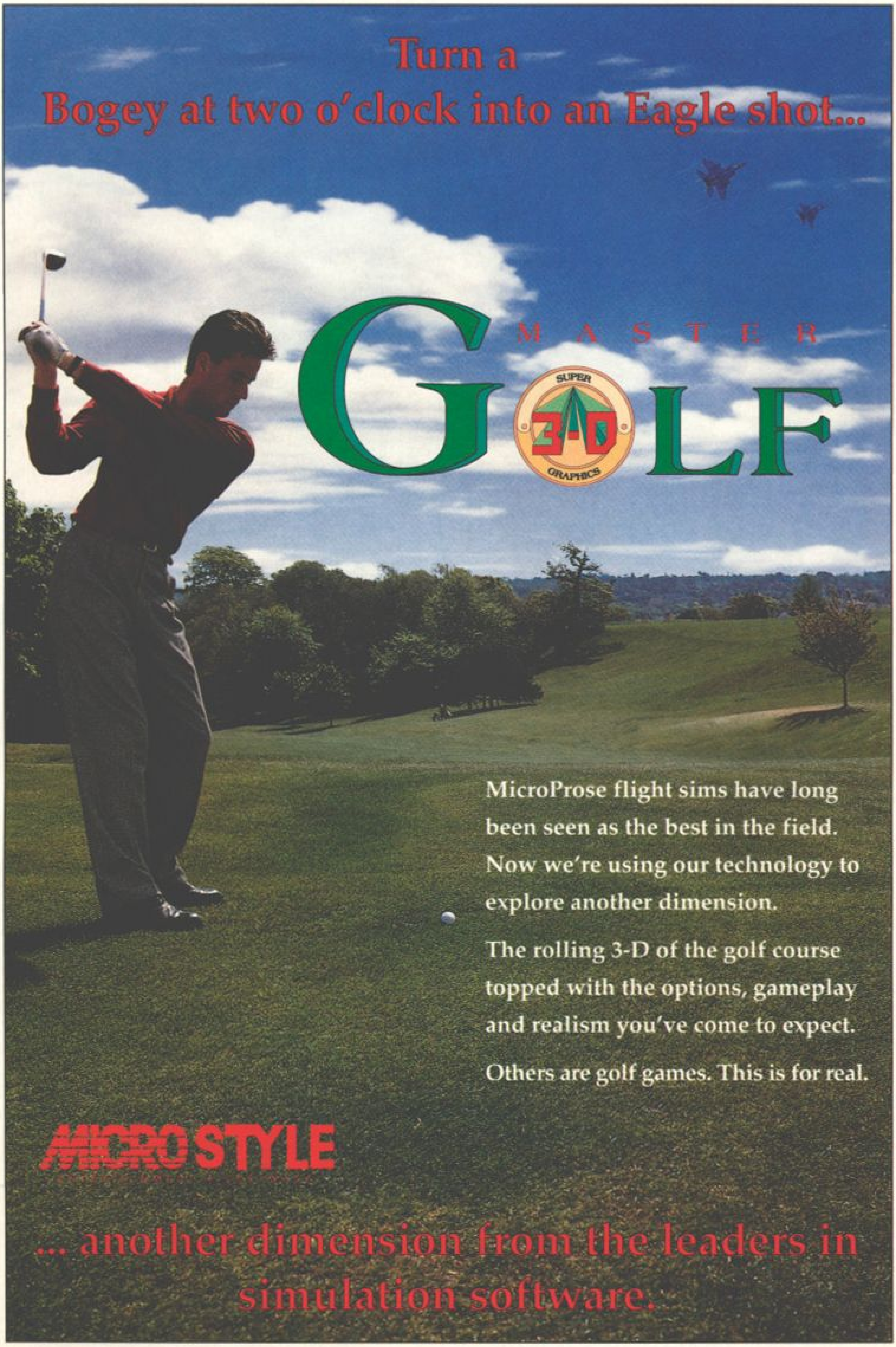
Turn a
Bogey at two o'clock into an Eagle shot...
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GRAPHICS

MicroProse flight sims have long been seen as the best in the field. Now we're using our technology to explore another dimension.

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letters

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YOU SAID WHAT?!

Having read your article on Famicom Super Mario (Issue 45), I have decided to write and offer my contribution to your thesis because I'm afraid I disagree. Ok, ok, so I'm letting myself wide open to mountains of criticism and hate mail, but I fail to see what the attraction is. I've got absolutely no intention of belittling the game's achievements.

It's obvious that a great deal of thought, care and attention has gone into the design and implementation of what many view as the ultimate Platform Game. Sonically it's fine, with some suitable music and excellent effects. Graphically, it's only Ok, because it doesn't really stretch the machine's capabilities and although there are plenty of clever visual effects and gags, it's been done a lot better elsewhere (Megadrive Mickey and Sonic for example).

Varied gameplay is there in abundance with plenty of puzzles although the basic run/jump/head-butt/squash action runs throughout the entire length of the game. However I do agree that you need to adjust your approach to each level because of the various challenges that face you and this aspect should make it a game that you want to keep playing in order to achieve that elusive 'satisfaction factor'.

Doing fine so far aren't we? I've agreed with virtually everything you've said apart from two things - playability and addictiveness. Where did these two factors disappear to? I've had the game for four months now and have only managed to save 12 game positions! It has to be one of the most frustrating titles I own!

Whether it's down to my incompetence, or the confusing and relatively un-responsive control method, I don't know but one thing is for sure - it's far from addictive! Many a joypad has been thrown against the monitor screen because the Italian phenomenon hasn't done what he was told, done something too late or not done it at all. I know I'm a good games player but why can't I get to grips with Mario?

I'm sure I'm not the only one who tears his hair out and screams uncontrollably after playing this game for ten minutes. Despite what you and many other magazines claim, this in my mind is not a playable or addictive game.

Just a final point. I read in a previous issue that Nintendo are so confident about Mario 4 that they think it will sell the Famicom for them. That's probably true but only because the character is a legend in video game entertainment and, as we all know, names always sell. It's also rather underhanded of Nintendo to expect fans of the series to buy a brand new machine in order to play the next instalment.

Julian Roche
Cheshire

Without wishing to nit-pick, your arguments are far from airtight. The fact that you can't get especially far in the game is neither here nor there. In fact achieving only 12 worlds in four months would seem to suggest some sort of arrested development. Unresponsive control? Perhaps you're joypad isn't connected properly, since we found the Mario's user interface as fast and friendly as any we've seen. And as for "Mario not doing what he was told"? Chins were set a-spinning when we came upon that old chestnut.

I can't really see your gripe about forcing people to buy the Famicom to play Mario4. For a start, there are other Mario games for every other Nintendo system. And after all, if you had to release every game on every format, simply to let everyone have a go, the game design would inevitably be aimed at the capabilities of the lowest machine, making it a pretty dull outing for top-end users.

Finally, your comment about names always selling suggests you're a bit confused. Mario's name has been built up from a series of successful video games, so why shouldn't his future titles sell? He is distinct from the real culprits utilising the names=sales adage, when rubbish games ride on the publicity of well known films. Next.

PREMATURE EXCITEMENT

My brother and I own an Amiga 500 and have been eagerly awaiting the release of 4D Sports Boxing. Your magacine announced in its review that the release date was to be January 1991. So, once a week we ran down to our local software outlet. Sad, dejected and quasi-suicidal we trudged back home with our saves pocket money still intact.

Why oh why did you raise our hopes to such an enormous State of erect expectancy, only to make us walk limply home every saturday unfulfilled. (You big tease).

I eventually phones up Mindscape who informed me that the release date was October 1991 despite the fact that your mag still carries the advert supporting a January 1991 release date!

Don't you think that with a game so lavishly praised by your magazine and so eagerly awaited by the public you should have written some kind of apology/announcement with regard to your hopelessly misguided information.

Please explain as my disillusionment with your magazine rains down on me like a B52 on a carpet bombing raid.

Andrew James Cooklin
Finchley

My, what an emotional fellow. 4D Boxing, at the time we reviewed the PC version was intended for an early 91 release on all formats. And although products as complex as Boxing often slip, it really isn't our place to apologise for softcos missing their own release dates.

8-BIT OF WHAT YOU FANCY

I would just like to say that your coverage of virtual reality is very good. But I have noticed your lack of support for 8 Bit computers. There seems to be no machine specific columns for these computers anymore which is really a shame.

I enjoyed these columns, especially the Commodore 64 columnds for its tips and cheats.

I have also noticed you seem to think that Turrican 2 was only releases on the ST and Amiga when in fact it has been out for some time on the 64, and it's totally brilliant. It has features like wonderfully smooth scrolling, very good graphics, parallax scrolling, excellent music and brilliant gameplay, so why haven't you reviewed it?

There have been no reviews for 8 bit computers for ages yet these comuters are far from dead and gone. If you have ceased to support these extremely popular machines please say so, and please say why. I hope you have not because it would be foolish to do so so you need only to look at games such as Turrican 2, Last Ninja 3 and Lotus Esprit to know why it would be foolish.

Jason Cooper,
Barnes.

Sorry to disappoint you Jason, but we are no longer covering 8-Bit machines. We know there are plenty of excellent games still being written for the machines, but ACE's job is to look to the future and catch new trends. We just couldn't jus-

tify giving space to 8-Bit machines which could be filled with information on the new computers and their software. However, we'd hope that all out 8-Bit readers will return to ACE once they've upgraded.

HARD, PINK

I'm a computer fanatic! I buy ACE every month, as well as C&VG and I always read them from cover to cover at least three times (including all the adverts and all the pink pages). First from "Hard Sell" you should give the name of the shop that gives the best processor for what it has and its price.

I also think that you should add a new section on moniters, for instance the best quality, the best prices and where to get them from. I hope if you did add it, it would be just like "HARD SELL" with the picture of it under its name. It would also be help to give its colour and quote its price and the best places to get it from.

For ACE readers page would it be possible to under "FOR SALE" highlight what they're selling. Also, I have an Amstrad CPC 6128 and I can never find the software for it, can you help me if so please write.

Sorry to go on but I think that the pinks would be a lot more interesting with this & it would help me and a lot of others out.

James Maltby
Putney

You'll be pleased to know that the Pink Pages will be totally overhauled in the next couple of months. Readers with particular queries about pinks or suggestions as to what they'd like to see in the letters should drop us a line.

ARE YOU FOR REAL?

In the last few months, your magazine has attempted to define the term 'Virtual Reality'. I think it might be best if you consider first what you are attempting to define so poetically. I believe that 'Virtual Reality' (used in its current sense) is a misnomer.

Let me explain by a list of what I believe is the major levels of Reality.

1) (Actual) Reality - The Real World. Everything you see exists and everything you do affects this world. In other words you have direct interaction with the world on every level of every sense.

2) Alternate Reality - Another world which can either be extremely like our own, or completely different. But, like (Actual) Reality, everything we do and say affects this workd.

3) Virtual (Actual) Reality - The simulated Real World. Our world simulated by some means (ie computers). This world is 'virtually' like ours exept for one thing; things we do don't directly affect the world, but indirectly via computer simulation.

4) Virtual Alternate Reality - As above, only in a different 'world'.

5) Partial Reality. (Both Actual and Alternative) - A 'world' where only a section of the world is available to our senses and we have limited control over the objects in the world.

Computer games and dreams sit in level 5 - Partial Reality. And this is where your so-called 'Virtual Reality' sits. The really good stuff may just be beginning to reach level 4. No-one has yet come close to level 3. No-one really believes in level 2 and no-one will ever reach level 1.

So, there you are, VR in a can.

Peter Meharf

Phew! Thank goodness someone knows what they're talking about. We were just throwing around those phrases because we thought we'd look big and clever.

BACK TO LIFE

I think that the secret of success in a computer game, no matter if it is an arcade or an adventure is the multiplayer element. No processor can supercede a human's mind and imagination so there is nothing more exciting than competing against one or more known or unknown persons with unexpected feelings and reactions.

No matter how far the game leads the player in its plot and action the addition of a human opponent or partner raises the interest and the gameplay straight up to the top.

Anyway multiplayer systems can be the answer to anyone who thinks that computer isolate the person from the out world.

Closing I would refer to an example to prove that a multiuser system brings life to a game; and that's life itself!

Because there ain't a multi user game more alive than life!

A. Anastasiudis

Very true. 'Hurrah!' for being alive.

DISK RESPECT

I read with astonishment in another magazine, *Amiga Power* that nobody will now be allowed to place ful-priced games on magazine covers.

Giving away free games was good for the consumer while it laster and probably benefited companies more than they dared let on.

For instance, it gave the readers a chance to play a good (albeit elderly) game, which having probably already been swallowed up by the competition and a batch of new releases, most people would not purchase at full price anyway.

Now, if companies saw magazines distibuting copies of Lemmings or Speedball 2, which they wouldn't bne allowed to do anyway, then this would be serious case for complaint. I have always felt that some major companies produce too many games than they know what to do with anyway. However, would these companies compromise if the following guidelines were used.

1) The magazine pays a fee to the company for the loan of its game.

2) The magazine pays all the disk dupliction costs.

3) Increasing its coverprice by about £1, the magazine includes the game.

4) For each magazine sole, 50 pence (half its increased price) is handed over to the company as royalties for using its game.

5) The magazine undertakes not to have more than 4 full-priced games on its cover disk per year.

Knowing little about magazine budgets, I'm not sure what hidden implications would also be included. It may be that my idea will not be considered after all.

One alternative would be to follow in the footsteps of the new magazine Amiga Fun by distributing previously unreleased games. Admittedly, I've never purchased this magazine so I don't know if it's any good.

If a game hasn't been commercially released, is it possible for it to be stopped from being used as a magazine cover disk?

If so, it looks as if everyone will be stuck with playing demos of the new releases which, in turn, only help to keep the companies with fat wallets

Stuart N Hardy
Sheffield.

TV QUICK

Recently I had my attention drawn to the inexplicable abscence of a computer games television program. Television is the ideal way to review games as a potential buyer could see the game in action without buying it or finding a friend who already has it. As a fan of most game genres, I own an Amstrad PCW, Compaq PC and a Game Boy, and would love to have the opportunity of really seeing what a game is like before I commit myself to a purchase. Although the reviews in magazines are reasonable they are woefully inadequate when compared to what they could be if there was a dedicated TV program.

It would be possible to see the graphics first hand instead of having to squint at small, inanimate screen shots. You would be able to head the music and sound effects whilst notes on playability, lastability and other subjective views could be relayed to the watched via a window display such as one used on ITV's Chart Show.

This would not signal the end for computer magazines, however. True, reviews based magazines would obviously suffer but quality publications such as ACE which has a high

PRIZE LETTER
PRIZE LETTER

enough proportion of articles concerning virtual reality and other technological innovations would continue to do well. I myself used to buy ACE, C&VG, Mean Machines, PC World and Games X, but I realised that the amount of duplicated material in them was so great that I eventually had to wean myself down to ACE and PC World. Are there any plan to fill the gam which clearly exists? I would like to know what the industry as a whole thinks of this.

Mark Kennedy
Shipley, West Yorks.

Far from inexplicable, the absence of a TV compuer-games show is entirely understandable. The battle for TV ratings is severe, so limiting the potential number of viewers to a show by only covering items which will interest computer owners is a dangerous move. When reading a computer magazine, it's unlikely that you'll be particularly interested in reviews of games which aren't on your machine, so imagine how boring it would be for people who have no interest at all. A 26 minute program wouldn't be able to touch on the depth of games in the way that magazines can. And what happens if you want to go back and refer to a review at a later date?

The results of trying to cover all bases with programs which educate Joe Public about computer games while informing the existing users have all fallen on their faces, and although a Chart Show variant would seem to be the best option at the moment, the non-human aspect of the subject matter makes it very difficult for casual viewers to be interested.

However, the sort of showreel sampling of graphics and sound you talk about is available in WHSmiths, through in-store video promotions put together by software companies and Bulletin 1000. A monthy vid of the latest releases plays in the computer area of most Smiths stores. Although these are basically adverts and offer little objectivity, you do get to see the graphicsmove and hear the sound. Most offer a running commentary on the game's features.

It's not usually our style to comment on the practises of other magazines, your letter does raise some interesting points.

ACE does not carry cover mounted disks of any sort. As a multi-format magazine, it would be impossible to properly cater for ST, Amiga, PC or Console owners. Someone would always lose out.

A more important point, however is that we'd rather people bought ACE for what's in it, not what's stuck to the front cover. We know that each issue sole is read, not treated as a free supplement bundled with your £2.95 set of games and demos.

Also the magazines who do give disks away are in a tricky position. A whole game is more inticing to the buyer than a demo, so the taim is to find the hottest affordable game for the cover each month. Fine. But if you can buy, let's say, three Amiga or ST magazines for £8 and walk away with six back-catalogue full-priced games, whay possible incentive is there to buy anything other than one major game each month.

After all, people can only spend so much time playing games in one month.

The age of many titles is irrelevant. Since so many new owners are joining the market, it really doesn't matter whether their free game is six weeks or three years old. And eventually, they have to ask themselves why, when they can buy a couple of full games for £2.95 they should consider paying ten times that amount for one title.

The situation was made worse by software companies hungry for some instant cash being only to happy to receive a couple of thousand pounds for a back-catalogue game which had already done the rounds on budget and compilation disks. It was a difficult decision to turn away instant money for a title which basically had no market value.

The logical conclusion being that through their "generosity" the mags would prevent anyone buying new games, the softcos would go broke, the mags would get no adverts and they would fold too. Grim eh?

Finally, recent ELSPA meetings with magazine publishers Future, Newsfield and EMAP attending resulted in the decision to halt the free-games spiral once and for all.

And everyone lived happily ever after and went back to producing decent magazines instead of disk-holders. If only.

STARRY, STARRY FIGHT

After reading your review of Star Control (issue 43, April, page 67) I feel I need to set some things straight. I realise the appreciation of a game is a rather subjective matter, but in this case I can hardly agree with the review.

Firstly it should be evident, even to the most ignorant computer gamer, that any comparison with games such as Elite and FoFT is totally out of order here. Star Control is no "spaceflight simulator", nor was it intended to be. Elite and FoFT rang in the same class as games like WIng Commander or Epic. Star Control, however, could best be compared with Archon and Archon II. For those who don't remember Archon, it's a strategy game simulating the confrontation between the forces of good and those of evil. Both sides have mixed group of fantasy creatures, all with inuqir abilities at their disposal. The game takes place on a 2D board and where two opposing creatures meet, the playing area is magnified to a full screen combat scene where battle ensues. Well, STar control is a similar game, but set in an intergalactic stage where spacecraft instead of creatures meet.

Let me just say that the game is simply great fun, especially in two player mode. Science fiction fans will doubtlessly appreciate the refreshing and humorous descriptions of the different alien races and their spacecraft (partly described by the works of popular SF writers) and as an avid strategy fan I can sssure you that the strategy element (learning the strengths and weaknesses of each craft and using them appropriately) is well implemented in the game. Graphics and sound are very good. I simply don't understand how your reviewer could make such a fuss over "too small graphics".This is simply part of the game system; to ensure the largest possible combat, dhips are displayed small (indeed) and as soon as they come within close range of each other they are magnified to adequate size.

To me, this is a very well functioning solution, and it should be said that even in their smallest depiction, all graphics are still well defined and clearly visible.

I find it rather surprising that you complain about the lack of originality and real two-player games on the one hand, and then flatten a game like Star Control which meets up to both these demands on the other. Luckily I purchased the game before reading your review, because the sad truth is that I probably wouldn't have bought it at all after seeing your rating.

David Van Dijck
Belgium.

Sorry you didn't like our review, David, and pleased you're enjoying Star Control. Personally, I agree fully with Lawrence's review of the game, finding it neither exciting or enjoyable. However, many others here at EMAP have been singing the games praises. CU Amiga for example (just across the floor) do little else but play Star Control. Just goes to show that there's no accounting for taste.

PLUMBING THE VERY DEPTHS

In issue 45 of ACE you said that Mario is a "pizza-man". What he really is is a plumber. That's why there are pipes in all of his games, and he wears a bib and braces.

Ben Dixon
Bognor Regis

Slip of the finger rather than a misheld conception, Ben. However, the writer of the piece has been chastised.

RON JUDY

Job Title: Head of Nintendo Europe

Status Report: It's BOOOM time for Nintendo in Europe. Everything is on the up and up as Euro-sprogs the continent over gobble up all manner of *Mario* merchandising.

Strengths: It's taken a while but Ron Judy's appointment of Bandai as distributor has the NES heading for the bigtime. Who'll win the dominant market share between Nintendo and Sega, no one knows but the huge lashings of cash available to Mr Judy enable him to seriously kick ass.

Weaknesses: Few displayed as yet.

What To Watch For: The Super Famicom, the Holy Grail of the console world, eagerly lusted over by anyone whose picked up a computer mag in the last six months. It's a long way off before it appears in Europe but if and when they launch, it will demolish the competition.

MR ISHIHARA

Job Title: Head of Sega UK

Status Report: Instrumental in stitching up deal Virgin/Sega European marketing deal, Mr Ishihara has help to set up a lean, mean selling machine. And with his ex-USG sidekick Richard Tidsall backing him up, Europe looks to be at his feet.

Strengths: Years in the arcade business have given Sega all manner of handy expertise allowing them not only to produce excellent hardware but top notch software as well. This is where Mr Ishihara's European assault is going to be a bit easier than the job Nintendo have before them.

Weaknesses: Being in charge of the UK market would seem to be a prestigious position but Mr Ishihara seems to be out on his own do a degree.

What To Watch For: Sega's bag of future goodies is certainly laden with a whole deal of great gadgetry that's bound to help Ishihara in his battle to the death against the mighty Nintendo. Look out for an incredibly powerful CD-ROM attachment for the Megadrive, a Megadrive modem and the long awaited 32 bit Gigadrive.

DAVID WARD/JON WOODS

Job Titles: Co-Owners, Ocean Software

Status Report: Officially, Ocean is still the top software house, with the awards and the market share to prove it. The usual story for the year: More licences snapped up, product line diversified a little further, launched a 16-bit budget range. Hired Dean Barrett.

Strengths: Ward is the original sage of the industry, and he knows more about what's what than most. So does Jon. Confucious say: never cross swords with Woods or Wardy. With the advent of a US office and increased Nintendo commitment, it shouldn't be too long before these guys get their own clouds and lightning bolts.

Weaknesses: Marketing, advertising and image are sound, but the tie-in product occasionally disappoints. The race to secure the rights to big movies before they've even been finished (eg: *Hook*) is risky. The fruits of such deals are not always ripe - remember *Nightbreed?* Confusing range of output - *Sim Earth* from the same company as *Chase HQ II*?

What To Watch For: *The Simpsons, Terminator 2. Robocop 3.* Maybe even a welcome return to some original product.

GEOFF BROWN

Job Title: Managing Director, US Gold

Status Report: Signed *Delphine* games to good effect, with the second game due out soon. Continued to be friends with Sega. A string of average licenced titles and very little else.

Strengths: Mister affable. Likes to put in appearances and have an active involvement at press bashes, unlike certain other sour-faced company bosses we could mention. Knows how to sign a licence.

Weaknesses: Even more self-effacing than ever. Rarely seen at anything but the most fashionable parties. The last two releases *Line of Fire* and *ESWAT* were mediocre, and Geoff would do well to stop the rot. Hopefully high-end affiliate labels *Lucasfilm* and *Cinematique* can do something to bolster the firm's image. Needs to get some quality product out there - and fast.

What To Watch For: BIG DEALS in the pipeline. Has Geoff got a late summer blockbuster up his sleeve?

CADOGAN HALL

(Top): Ocean's David Ward (left) and Gremlin's Ian Stuart do battle for the marketplace. (Above): Mirrorsoft's Peter Bilotta.

(Below): Electronic Arts' Mark Lewis .

GREG FISHBACH

Job Title: Managing Director, Acclaim

Status Report: Acclaim may not be a name with household familiarity throughout our Sceptred Isle but as Nintendo grows in Europe, Acclaim will go with them. Acclaim are possibly the most important stateside Nintendo publisher with a large and successful range of licensed product. 1991 saw the release of many mega hits including *Punisher* and *The Simpsons.*

Strengths: With more lolly than kojak, if Greg wants something he buys it, no messing.

Weaknesses: Despite selling tons of games through clever marketing, Acclaim are often let down on the quality side through sub contracting to inferior development companies. Greg really should take a personal interest in this aspect of his business as punters won't chow down on hamburgers forever when other companies are offering sirloin.

What To Watch For: On the grapevine are rumours of financial instability though these stories roots are likely to be in the jealous chatter of rivals rather than good, hard truth. Let's see how it goes.

STEVE FRANKLIN

Job Title: Managing Director, Commodore UK

Status Report: This last year has seen the Amiga firmly establish itself as the definitive 16-bit home computer. Currently involved with the CDTV launch, Steve's got his hands more than full.

Strengths: With a reputation for never mincing his words or suffering fools gladly, Mr Franklin is not a man to mess with. Steve is probably the most physicaly scary man in the computer world. In a rage, is rumoured to make Hannibal Lecter look like Bungle the Bear.

Weaknesses: There was the Commodore GS, a garish looking machine with a slightly binatonesque feel to it. Merely a C64 with no keyboard; punters kept well clear of it in their droves.

What To Watch For: CDTV, gold at the end of rainbow or another marketing nightmare? The coming year will tell.

JACK TRAMIEL

Job Title: Mr Atari

Status Report: *Not a very exciting year* for Atari the only real highlight being the newly launched TT. 32Mhz of Super ST which the world just yawned at.

Strengths: Originally head honcho at Commodore, Jack is not a man to take trouble lightly. "Do it my way or watch your butt" says Jack in not so many words and when you're running a high flying hardware company that might be the best way to keep things in order.

Weaknesses: Like it or not, the Atari ST is in decline nowadays and it looks like a trend that's set to continue. Instead of responding to this consumer rejection of his current hardware with bonzer new computers, Jack'll stick to his guns to the grim end.

What To Watch For: There's the *Panther* coming up in the very near future which if anything like the machine Atari are rumoured to have created, will be truly awesome.

Getting a hit game on the streets in today's cut-throat software market is no job for Mr Fainthearted. So just who are the real movers and shakers in the games industry today? Who are the men and women who have the power to dictate which games *you* play? In a no-holds barred ACE report, we name the top 50 industry string pullers and assess their recent performance. *By Gary Whitta and Gary Liddon*

EXTREME

MARK LEWIS

Job Title: Managing Director, Electronic Arts Ltd

Status Report: *PowerMonger* was a good year's software highlight for Mark - in the first month it sold more copies than *Populous* has to date! Negotiated a boffo deal to become the country's first fully-licenced Sega MegaDrive developer/publisher and added a few more Stateside affiliate labels.

Strengths: Being American is a distinct advantage over here - Euro-businessmen go all weak at the knees when they hear that accent. Well educated - Yale University graduate. Nominated for Industry Personality of the Year at last year's Computer Arena conference. Looks good in casual clothes.

Weaknesses: Tends to be too optimistic. Needs to learn more about the global marketplace by his own admission. Doesn't get out and about as much as he'd like.

What To Watch For: Some very big deals going down soon...

PETER BILOTTA

Job Title: Managing Director, Mirrorsoft

Status Report: *TURTLES!* Masterminded the biggest licencing coup the industry has ever seen. The game went on to become the biggest seller of all time. Lost the Bitmap Brothers to Renegade, and the future of the Cinemaware label is now uncertain after the company's crash. Successfully launched Mirror Image budget label.

Strengths: Never one to pussyfoot around, whether it's with his own staff or when dealing with other firms. Good contacts and industry know-how has helped him retain Mirrorsoft's image as a quality publisher. An all-round good guy.

Weaknesses: After *Turtles*, Bilotta may have been bitten by the licence bug. A string of mediocrities such as *Back To The Future II* and *III* and *Predator 2* haven't helped matters much. Now we have *Alien 3*, *Turtles 2* and *Cisco Heat* on the way. Must be careful of this sort of thing if Image Works is not to turn into just a conversion factory.

What To Watch For: The first games from Acme Interactive, Bob Jacob's new company, to arrive through Mirrorsoft. *Turtles 2.*

IAN STEWART

Job Title: Managing Director, Gremlin

Status Report: A good year that seems to have depended on racing games - *Super Cars*, *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*, *Team Suzuki* and *Toyota Celica Rally* have all done well. *Super Cars 2* looks to do the same.

Strengths: You don't survive in the business as long as Ian has without doing something right - he invented *Monty Mole*, you know. At moment, Ian looks as if he can do no wrong, and the days of *Jack the Nipper* and *MASK* are well behind him.

Weaknesses: Wholehearted belief in his product range means bad reviews weigh heavily on Ian's shoulders. There are only so many car firms to tie racing games to, and Ian's running out - *Skoda Favorit Turbo Rally* just doesn't seem like a viable proposition.

What to Watch For: The big board-game licence *Hero Quest*, on which Gremlin has a lot riding. *Switchblade 2*. *Impossamole* on the PC Engine.

GEOFF HEATH

Job Title: European Director, Mindscape International

Status Report: Signed a distribution deal with Renegade. Successfully negotiated raid on high-ranking Ocean staff, poaching Pam Griffiths and Colin Stokes in one fell swoop. Gave Phil Harrison a Sierra Cosworth.

Strengths: The ultimate businessman, has been around longer than time itself. Mr Shrewd. Classy corporate image, impeccable US contacts. Oodles of credibility, very well respected worldwide.

Weaknesses: Tendency to continually hob-nob with Stateside VVVIPs makes him inaccessible to the lower orders most of the time. Corporate image is still too stuffy to get the punters interested - a little bit of livening-up would do the world of good.

What To Watch For: That little bit of livening-up, perhaps from the Bitmaps?

IAN HETHERINGTON /JONATHAN ELLIS

Job Title: Joint Managing Directors, Psygnosis

Status Report: *Lemmings* and *Beast 2* were the high spots of an otherwise dull year. *Killing Game Show, Infestation, Anarchy* were all average. *Awesome* was anything but. Signed a big-money deal with Ocean to put *Lemmings* on console.

Strengths: Somehow manage to retain good punter perception despite releasing flashily packaged, run-of-the-mill games. Made a monster out of *Lemmings* - but then again, who wouldn't have?

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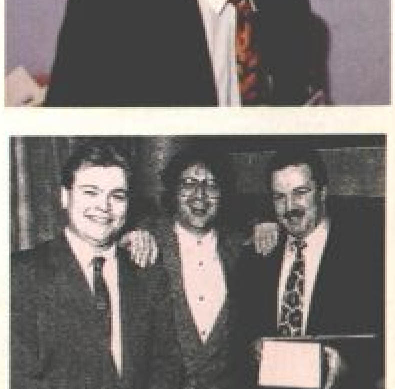

(*Top right*): Psygnosis' Jonathan Ellis. (*Middle right*): Ocean's Gary Bracey is a man who nose the software business. (*Bottom right*): Psygnosis' Ian Hetherington (right).

THE BIG 50 ...continued

Weaknesses: Programmers perhaps don't get recognition they deserve - did you know DMA Design did *Lemmings?* Ian's occasionally over-precious attitude to his product can cause friction.
What To Watch For: Apparent assult on multi-media CD market.

FRANK HERMAN

Job Title: Deputy MD of Virgin Mastertronic
Status Report: As the man that made Mastertronic before selling it off to Virgin, Frank has a long and prestigous history in the software industry. At the moment he spends a lot of time in negotiation with Sega Japan sorting out the day to day details of their business relationship.
Strengths: Frank's a man from the tough but fair world of business practice whose ability to bear a grudge makes him someone who should not be crossed. He has a reputation for tough negotiation tactics and it certainly seems to get results.
Weaknesses: An explosive temper. Frank plays close to the line and he's probably crossed it once or twice.
What to Watch For: Getting on a bit now Frank must be looking forward to retirement so maybe this year will see him him finishing of his days with the Mastertronic name he was so instrumental in creating.

ALAN SHARAM

What To Watch For: Sales Manager, Virgin Mastertronic
Status Report: Continuing in his successful Sega involvement, Alan has worked hard to establish the Sega consoles as the definitive games machines for Europe.
Strengths: Very good salesman if he has a feel for the product and with Sega he's done wonders.
Weaknesses: With a propensity for hesitation, Alan refuses to be put on the spot. Favourite phrase is "uhuhuhuhuh".
What to Watch For: Any kind of instant commitment to anything ever.

GARY BRACEY

Job Title: Software Director, Ocean
Status Report: Recent promotion from Software Manager to Software Director puts him right up there with the bigwigs - but so far the only practical upshot of his directorship seems to be that it's now more difficult than ever to get him on the phone. Over the last year has become more involved with Ocean's licence-buying operation, and helped set up the company's US office.
Strengths: A true industry veteran, Bracey's got all the connections that count. Level headed too. Not quite as accessible as he used to be, but still one of the best when it comes to shmoozing people that need shmoozing.
Weaknesses: Gary has his work cut out for him if he is after critical acclaim for *Robo 3* and *Terminator 2* from the licence-jaded press. However, new gamestyles for both titles are promised.
What To Watch For: Bracey masterminding Ocean's assault on the Super FamiCom CD market.

ASH TAYLOR

Job Title: *Managing Director, Leisuresoft*
Status Report: Ash's canny know-how has turned Leisuresoft into the largest software distributor in UK knocking former giants Centresoft off the top.
Strengths: A sound businessman with a good eye for talent giving Leisuresoft a competent and efficient staff. Good management skills.
Weaknesses: Tendency to blow hot and cold can often leave colleagues confused. Ash's short temper coupled with his lack of care about who he upsets make him a sometimes controversial character.
What To Look For: The next few years will see the continued expansion of Leisuresoft into European territories. Look out Fritz and Marcel, the Brits are coming!

ROD COUSENS

Job Title: Head Honcho, Acclaim UK
Status Report: A year of meditation and meticulous positioning for one of the industry's old stalwarts. After the big blow in the form of the demise of Activision, a period of limbo ensued (what was he doing on that Domark Christmas card?) Now at the helm of big-time US Nintendo publisher Acclaim's UK office.
Strengths: Has been around long enough to know what's what. Impeccable list of contacts, and enviable industry knowledge. Nice suits.
Weaknesses: The Activision crash and subsequent limbo period inevitably lost Rod lots of that hard-earned kudos.
What To Watch For: Rod gearing up Acclaim for an Activision style success story.

FERGUS McGOVERN

Job Title: Head Honcho, Probe Software
Status Report: Probe were always the ubiquitous ones and this year alone has seen *Back To Future III*, *Outrun Europa*, *Viz* and the ludicrously saleable *Turtles* enter Probe's softography. Publishers are clamouring to get a bit of Fergus in their product line.
Strengths: Currently rumoured to be turning over £5 million a year, Probe have been on a steep and steady climb to stratospheric heights ever since Fergus jacked in publishing games to concentrate on developing them for other people. Fergus' no-nonsense approach has earned an inroad into some of the world's most powerful boardrooms. Getting work isn't problem for Fergus, but how much can one man oversee?
Weaknesses: Probe has a peculiar reputation. Adored by the softcos, but his Press rep isn't too hot, since although his titles sell by the bucketload, the innovation side could do with some work.
What To Watch For: Were Probe afforded a wider brief, perhaps some originality would be allowed to shine through.

TOM WATSON

Job Title: Director, Renegade
Status Report: Tom's slick move to set up Renegade has put in him a position much envied by other software supremos.
Strengths: Tom's key strength is his ability to delegate work. Also, when it comes to getting his mush all over the computer magazines, Tom really is a master. and these skills have lead to both he and *Renegade have an extremely high press* profile.
Weaknesses: Often wears jeans with a shirt and tie, the haute couture equivalent of eating peas off the back of a knife. Determination to make Regenade sound like dangerous software rebels lead to some sneers.
What To Look For: Yet more magazines with Tom's bonce splashed all over them.

PHILIP LEY

Job Title: General Marketing Manager, Sega UK
Status Report: Worked a bit of marketing magic to turn the Sega Master System and Mega Drive from kids' toys into invaluable fashion accessories. Mega Drive now extremely popular, and Master System doing a lot better than it would otherwise deserve to.
Strengths: On the ball - more or less. Willing to try new angles.
Weaknesses: Keeness to break with tradition leads to flawed decisions (Megadrive ads in Penthouse?) Inaccessible to the Press.
What To Watch For: How long has Sega got before Nintendo go nuclear and launch the Super Famicom?

DOMINIC WHEATLEY /MARK STRACHAN

Job Title: Joint Managing Directors, Domark
Status Report: Continued ongoing relationship with Tengen. Broke the ice with Taito, signing two potentially heavyweight coin-op titles. Set up The Kremlin, Domark's own out-of-house in-house development office, to good effect. Launched a budget label. Changed the company logo twice. Annual turnover reached record £3.5m.
Strengths: True industry characters. Love publicity, and have managed to sustain a delicate balance between their ever-popular toffee-nosed twits image and respected industry position. Underneath the funny Photo-stunt costumes throb two very shrewd business brains. Exquisite dress sense.
Weaknesses: The boys must be careful *not to rely too heavily on licensed* product. So far, most of Domark's original product has been top-notch. A greater percentage of that sort of thing wouldn't hurt.
What To Watch For: More pictures of the boys in silly costumes, falling out of planes etc. *Race Drivin'*, the big gambit for Christmas. Another logo change (please). And more original product.

(Top): Domark's Dominic Wheatley (left) and Mark Strachan.
(Above): Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux.

SEAN BRENNAN

Job Title: Marketing and Sales Director, Mirrorsoft
Status Report: Imageworks has grown steadily over the last few years through the concerted work of a proffesional and proficient team. Sean's input has been a key element in this gargantuan rise and with Imageworks' generally high standard of product he's been able to totally outshadow his previous work at Firebird.
Strengths: A no-nonsense straight talking approach gets Sean results even when the product isn't as up to scratch as it may be. *Turtles* is an excellent case in point, selling far too many exactly considering the program's dubious quality. Could sell ice to Eskimos and a fridge to keep it in.
Weaknesses: Sean's industry heavyweight image is brought somewhat into question when he starts lobbing food about in plush resturaunts, a habit that tends to get wear thin after the fourteenth time.
What To Watch For: *Aliens III*. Due to an odd plot and being generally strange all round it's going to be a tricky task to mirror a film that hasn't got any where near the blood and guts of its predecessors.

PETER MOLYNEUX

Job Title: Technical Director, Bullfrog Productions
Status Report: Wrote *PowerMonger*, one of the year's biggest chart hits and award scooper-uppers. Supervised the mildly-popular *Flood*. Has taken his company from a one-hit wonder with Populous to arguably the hottest property in the industry today.
Strengths: No-one takes more care when it comes to game production. Design and playability takes prescedence over everything. Exceptionally talented designer and programmer. Soaks up publicity like a sponge, and now rivals Eric Matthews as the players' favourite coder.
Weaknesses: A tendency to be too much of a perfectionist - which dragged *PowerMonger* badly behind schedule. While the recognition is there, the image needs work - nowhere near the popstar appeal of the Bitmaps, although that perhaps isn't a bad thing.
What To Watch For: *Bullfrog* re-negotia-

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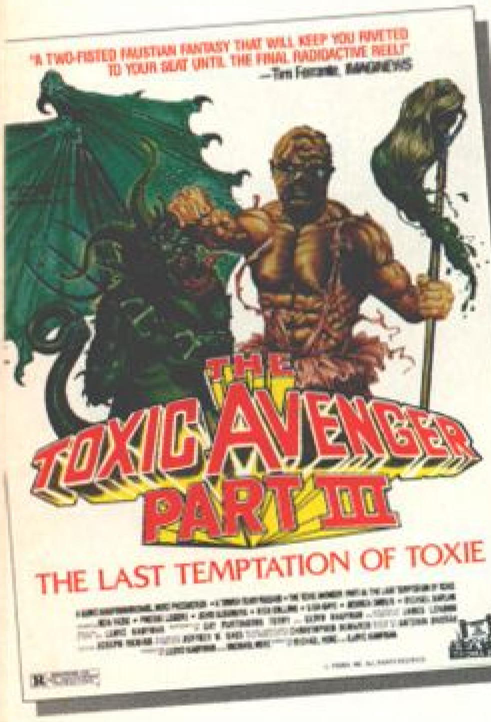
ACE EXCLUSIVE IN FRANCE

IN THE CANNES

The boats bob in the harbour, the beautiful people spend their time at parties and *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown* is ready to be licensed. Rik Haynes investigates...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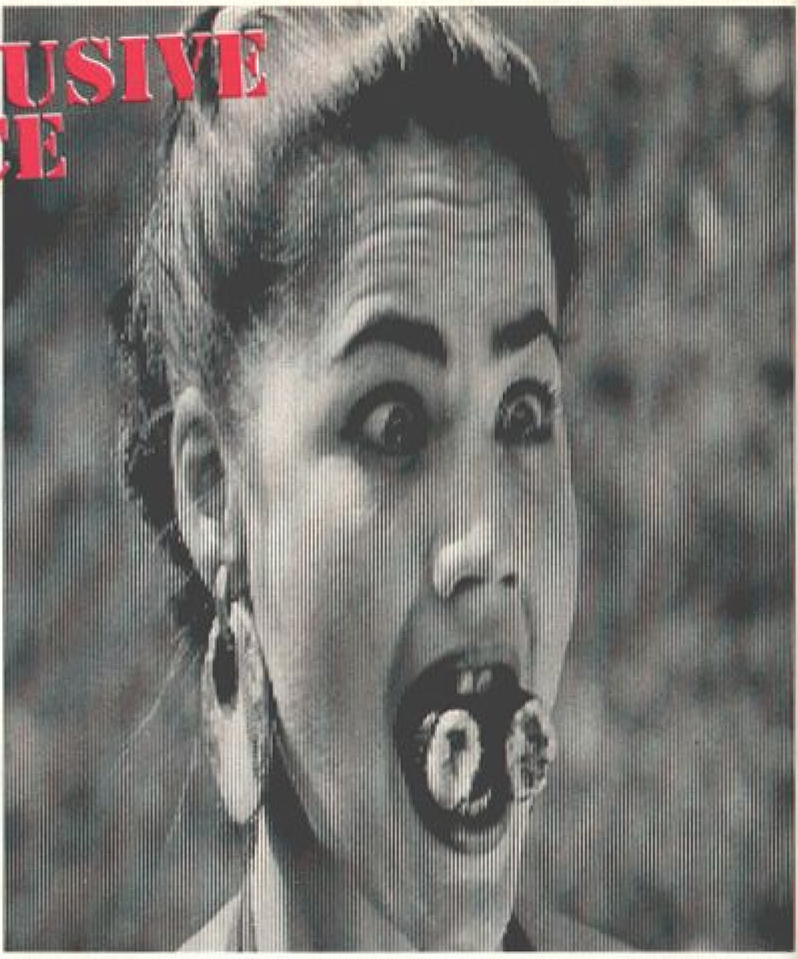
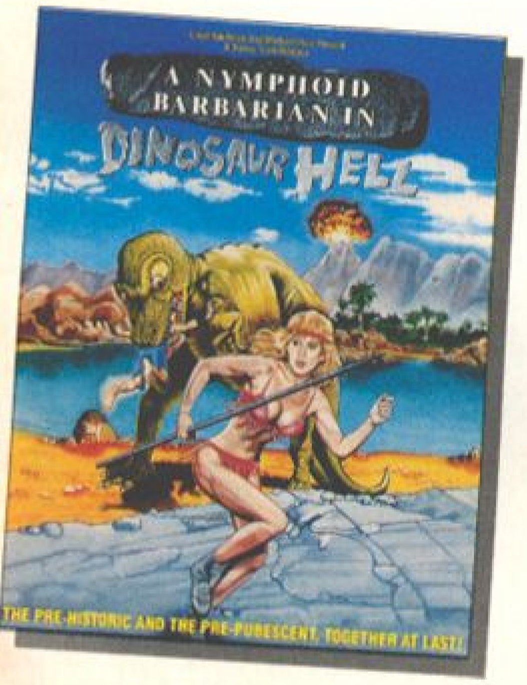
THE LAST TEMPTATION OF TOXIE



Sun, sea and surf were not on the top of my priority list as I strolled La Croisette towards Palais Des Festivals. For twelve days in May, film stars and sleazeballs live uncomfortably together in an effort to promote themselves, and maybe, the movie industry. The 44th Cannes Film Festival had been well and truly hijacked by Madonna and her outrageous promotion of the *Truth or Dare: In Bed with Madonna* documentary. Not much chance of a shoot'em-up conversion here, so my search for an ice cream and the ultimate B-movie continued.

I was on my way to the infamous Hotel Carlton – home of the rich, famous and their myriad of minders. Here, in Suites 160/161, resided the President of bad taste motion pictures Lloyd Kaufman. Have you ever seen *Surf Nazis Must Die*, *The Toxic Avenger* or *Class of Nuke 'Em High*? These, and many more like them, come from Troma, Inc., "one of the oldest and most active independent Producer-Distributors in the world". And when they say independent they mean it!


A NYMPHOID BARBARIAN IN DINOSAUR HELL
THE PRE-HISTORIC AND THE PRE-PUBESCENT. TOGETHER AT LAST!

These cult movies courtesy of Troma began back in the 1970s when the first multiplex cinemas started to appear. Since these pioneering days Troma has enjoyed tremendous demand for its productions thanks to the introduction of home video, cable and satellite viewers hungry for new material – no matter how tacky those shows may be. In fact, the wackier the better.

"Our strategy is simple," says a Troma spokesperson, "produce films on tightly controlled budgets that major Hollywood studios do not supply to the general public. These films are primarily aimed at the 16-35 year-old market, traditionally the largest segment of the movie-going audience."

So what about the actual product? Troma now has a library of nearly 100 feature-length films. "We've always been on the cutting edge of film-making with controversial and unique subjects and titles," the spokesperson confirms.

My personal Tromaville favourite is *Chopper Chicks in Zombietown*. A leather-clad gang of macho motorcycle mamas, known as the Cycle Sluts, stomp into a quiet desert town looking for a few good men. "It's a hell-raising biker-babes vs. flesh-hungry zombies in the wildest, action-crammed climax ever committed to celluloid," asserts Troma. The American press have gone wild over this whip-tickling release. Joe Bob Briggs of the Dallas Observer says, "The finest features of *Re-Animator* and *Seven Samurai*... Joe Bob says check it out". While The Austin Chronicle states the movie has: "Shades of *Night of the Living Dead*...brimming with wit, ingenuity, irreverence". High praise indeed.

More motion picture mayhem can be found in *A Nymphoid Barbarian in Dinosaur Hell*, where deadly dinosaurs arise from a nuclear holo-

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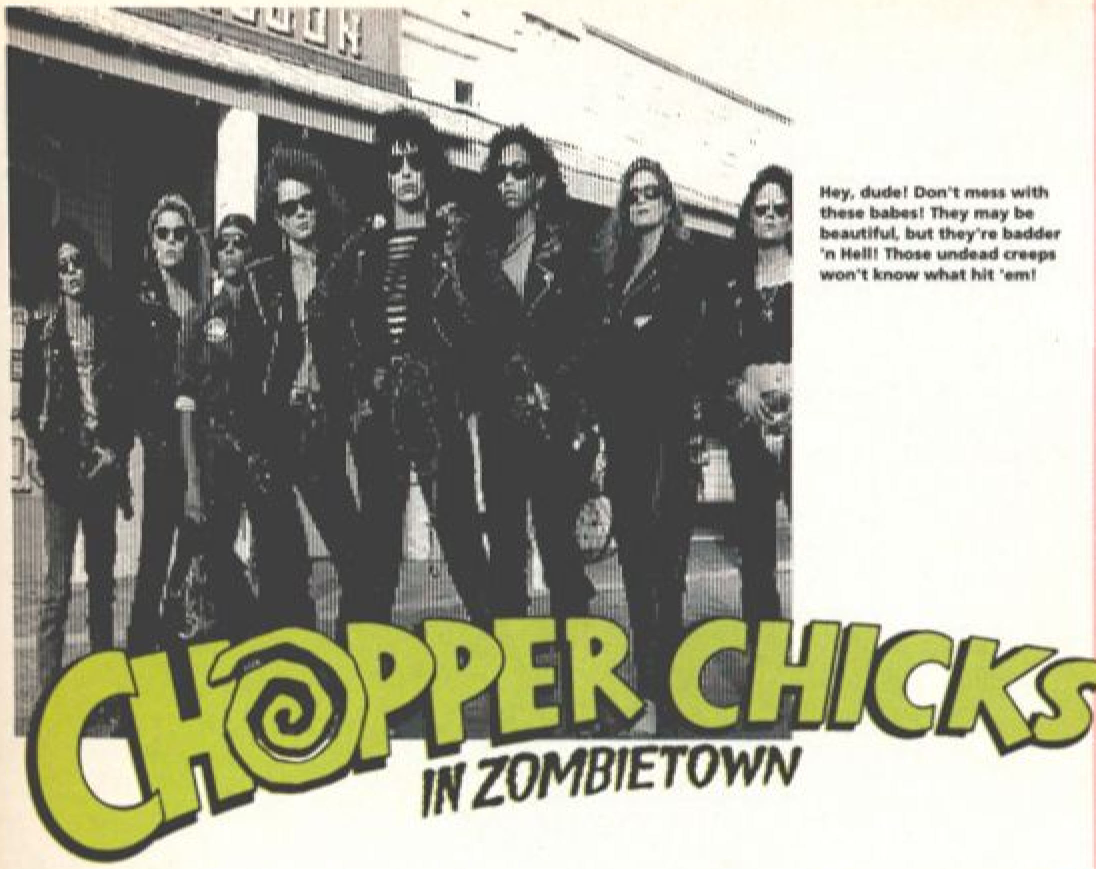


Hey, dude! Don't mess with these babes! They may be beautiful, but they're badder 'n Hell! Those undead creeps won't know what hit 'em!

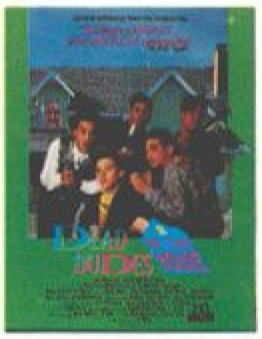
caust. Or what about *The Toxic Avenger Part III: The Last Temptation of Toxie, Dead Dudes in the House* or *Subhumanoid Meltdown: Class of Nuke 'Em High Part 2?* In the latter epic, another nuclear incident creates 'hideously deformed but very positive thinking humongous mutant squirrels and obnoxious talking belly buttons with bad attitudes'.

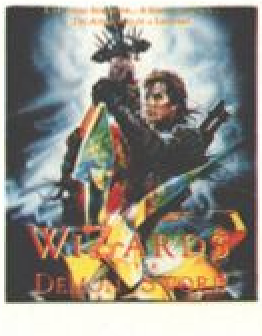
Troma's most popular creation , *The Toxic Avenger*, is being been turned into a TV-cartoon series and Marvel has licensed the character for comics books. Even the makers of those Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are producing Toxic toys. The original Toxic Avenger is played by former Dallas Cowboy American Football player Ron Razio with singer and performance artist Phoebe Legere as his 'beautiful, blind, blond, buxom, bimbo' girlfriend. Need we say anymore?

In a very smart marketing move, Troma has re-released two of Kevin Costner's early movies – *Sizzle Beach USA* and *Shadow's Run Black*. These aren't quite in the same league as his efforts *Dancing with Wolves, The Untouchables* or *Field of Dreams* but Costner fans will probably be thrilled to see the first filmed efforts of their hero.

Amazingly, there is a video game based around a famous Troma flick currently underway. Are there any other brave software companies out there? Contact ACE if you're interested and we'll put you in touch with Troma.

Epilogue. Just as I left the cinematic circus of Cannes, a nervous youth shuffled over to me in a rather familiar way. To my surprise, he wasn't selling a chemical cocktail. Instead, I was offered tickets to the special *Terminator 2* Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles next month. This perhaps highlights the ultimate similarity between Cannes and Hollywood – you can buy anything for the right price. See you in LA!





SGT.
KABUKIMAN
N.Y.P.D.

CLASS OF
Nuke'Em High
PART
2

Ooooh dear! The students at Tromaville Institute of Technology have brought their work home with them. Look out for mutant squirrels and talking belly buttons...

THE BIG 50 ...continued

What To Watch For: *Bullfrog* re-negotiating its contract with EA to become more of an independent force, as opposed to just a development team. And of course, *Populous II.*

GERRY TUCKER

Job Title: MD, Virgin Games
Status Report: Promotion from Financial Director to Managing Director catapulted him into the big leagues. Yet to make big waves with his new-found power, but it's early days yet.
Strengths: Financial background translates into good business sense. Good guy.
Weaknesses: Doesn't know much about the games industry - but a fast learner. Fairly low industry profile.
What To Watch For: Gerry becoming a prominent industry figure.

JAQUI LYONS

Job Title: Programmer Agent
Status Report: With a few of her clients in the Mediagenic boat when it hit the iceberg she had a hard slog on her hands wrestling her boys from the gory wreckage.
Strengths: Representing the big boys in the programming world, Jaqui is the defacto agent. Her client list reads like a computer industry who's who of who's who. It'll cost you 15% if she decides to take you on but it's money well spent as she'll fight tooth and claw to get you the best deal with the best people.
Weaknesses: Jaqui is certainly a driven character but in some respects she may be a tad overdriven. She has not only earned the respect, but also the fear, of many software publishers.
What To Watch For: Later this year will see the release of Archer Maclean's *3D Snooker* and Glyn Williams' *Air Duel*, both excellent and both Jaqui Lyons' properties. The legend continues.

DAVE BRABEN

Job Title: Freelance software author
Status Report: Dave's currently at work on *Elite II*, probably the most eagerly awaited game since the last most eagerly awaited game. Publishers are already lining up for right old ding dong to see who gets this guaranteed money maker in their catalogue.
Strengths: A fortune from computer software rumoured to be hovering around the £600,000 mark, Braben's strong and original ideas are heavily inspirational to the computer programming fraternity giving him a sort of passive power over games styles.
Weaknesses: Outspoken, though his views on consoles and machine capabilities are most kindly described as "unconventional". Nintendo *Elite* failed impress either our Japanese or American cousins and apparently is still without a publisher.
What To Watch For: *Elite II* and then it's probably another seven year wait until his next major release.

GEOFF CRAMMOND

Job Title: Freelance sotware author
Status Report: Currently working on a secret project for Microprose. This project has kept him busy as a bee since the completion of the ever popular *Stunt Car Racer.*
Strengths: Like Dave Braben, a power monger through inspirational and innovative work across a variety of computer formats.
Weaknesses:A strange, strange fellow with practically no colour vision at all. What's more he's deeply suspicious of all computer business types who cross his path. Geoff can often cause great hassle with software publishers through an overly protective attitude to his work.

☞27

Spirit of Excalibur

Spirit of Excalibur

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* More than 2.5 megabytes of dazzling graphics
* Powerfully orchestrated sound-track
* 16 screen scrolling map of Arthurian Britain
* Zoom from map level down to individual towns and cities
* Hundreds of hours of play-time
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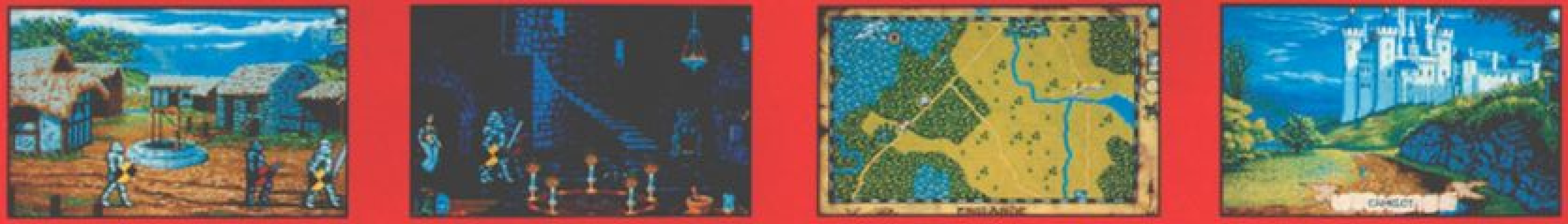
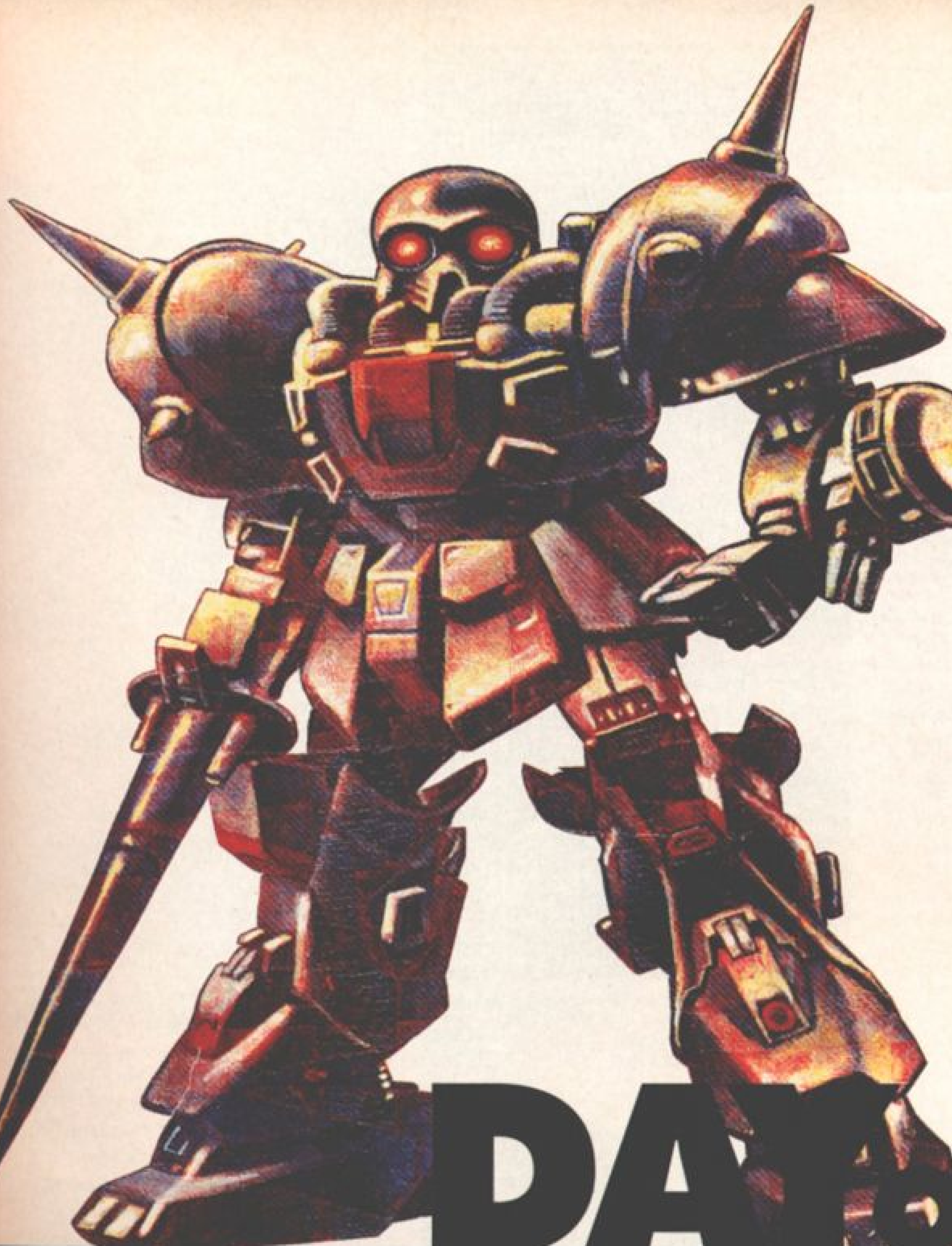
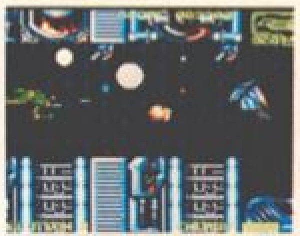
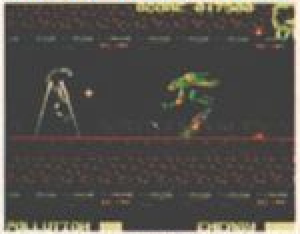


IBM PC VGA SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN

Virgin
GAMES
IMMACULATE
CONCEPTS







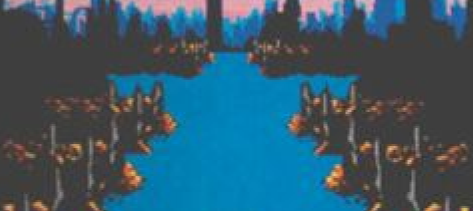
(Top) Robozone has been developed over the past 12 months, though Arc Developments took a break to code the Predator 2 games of the movie. The final section is a horiz-scroller coaster through the inside of the reactor. Paul Walker is providing the graphics with music by Justin Scharvona. Robozone is effectively three games in one and will be released in the autumn for all major micro formats. No console versions are currently planned.

(Above) Wolverine meets up with a 'tripodasaurus' in the underground surroundings of Robozone's phase one. Your pile of mecha can pick-up extra armament along the way including armour-piercing rounds, grenades, flame-throwers and lasers. The type of weapon currently selected and amount of ammunition left is displayed in the green graphic in the top left of the screen. This arcade adventure style part of the game is filled with vehicles to destroy and objects to avoid like radioactive steam sporadically spraying out and acid dripping from the ceiling.

(Bottom Left) A look at the second stage *Robozone* on the PC from Imageworks and Arc Developments. By the next century, New York has been turned into a radioactive wasteland. As the last surviving Wolverine you must stop the pollutants from taking over what's left of the city. This 3-D section has you strolling down the streets on your way to Metal Mutant HQ.

DAY OF THE DROIDS

They feel no fear or pain. Rik Haynes meets the machines of cybernetic culture...



Think robot and you'll probably conjure up images of Robocop, Terminator or R2-D2. You may even remember the bulbous Robbie the Robot from Forbidden Planet. If you're into the trendy clubland scene you could possibly shout that 'We Are The Robots' slogan using a stupid voice in reference to the recent Kraftwerk remix. Just why are we all robo-crazy?

Karel Capek first coined the phrase 'robot' in his Rossum's Universal Robots novel during the early 1920s. The term is derived from 'robota' , the Czech word for labour.

If they're not building cars or involved in some other industrious task, imaginary robots are usually up to mechanical mischief. They like nothing better than to equip themselves with the latest in armour-plating and weaponry of maximum megadeath. And if a real idiot writes their control program, the end of humanity is just around the corner. Take a glance at Fred Saberhagen's series of Berserker books for some scary confirmation.

The Japanese took to the idea of robots from the very start. Sci-fi author Isaac Asimov is seen as the robo-guru, but the likes of Masaki Sakamoto were literally years ahead. While Japanese technologists strive for the fully automated factory, the equally creative talents of science-fiction visionaries are producing a constant supply of robot movies, comics, animated TV shows, toys and video games.

ROBOT REVENGE

Generally speaking, these fantasy robots are supposed to do our bidding. Except they usually turn against us within the first three chapters. Sometimes they even transform into a higher species of life. Remember the super-human qualities of the replicants in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* movie?

At other times, there is actually a fusion of flesh and metal with human pilots of huge warrior-robots physically and mentally linked to their machines of destruction. Battletech merely scratches the surface.

Robots are no strangers to computer and console games. Who can forget the classic sample of speech from Impossible Mission (Epyx/US Gold): "Destroy him, my robots!" And that's exactly what they've been trying to do over the past seven years. These days, nearly every Japanese shoot'em-up features some sort of transformable droid complete with plasma engines, photon guns and an uncanny resemblance to us poor humans. There's simply no stopping them. During the course of May, ACE looked at Ultra Games' Base Wars (see news) and Metal Mutants from Silmarils/Palace (reviewed on page 82). Plus there's Cyber Fight (Electronic Arts) and Robozone (Imageworks) featured elsewhere in this article.

Even Maxis, the Californian developer of SimCity and SimEarth, launched Robosports for the Macintosh last month. This is a futuristic battle simulation game which can be played by up to four players over the AppleTalk network.

Leeds-based games developer Vektor Grafix are working on a game based around Battletech. Still at an early stage, this title uses sophisticated 3D software technology with individual animation and movement of joints to give incredibly realistic results. Seeing one of these beasts falling down and getting back up is apparently a very entertaining sight. Unfortunately, insiders suggest Activision has put the game on ice. We hope they're wrong!

JUDGMENT DAY

Gary Bracey, Software Director at Ocean, reckons the forthcoming computer and console games based around *Terminator 2* and *Robocop 3* will make software developers rethink the way movie-licensed games are produced.

Digital Image Design, the action simulation specialists behind *F-29 Retaliator* and *Epic*, have already created some stunning 3D work for *Robocop 3*. Despite a new 12-Rating for the third movie, there's no shortage of energy in the 16-bit versions of the game. The car chase, for example, utilises graphics routines more advanced than those found in Retaliator. Black comedy isn't missing, either. We bet you can't wait to try out Robocop's latest peripheral, the flying 'jet-pack'.

On the subject of *Terminator 2*, Bracey is remaining tight-lipped until the movie is released in the summer. This science-fiction extravaganza has reportedly cost a whopping $100 million to make. Not surprising when you consider the special effects bill came in at a little under $17 million and muscular star Arnie Schwarzenegger got his own private jet plane for his troubles.

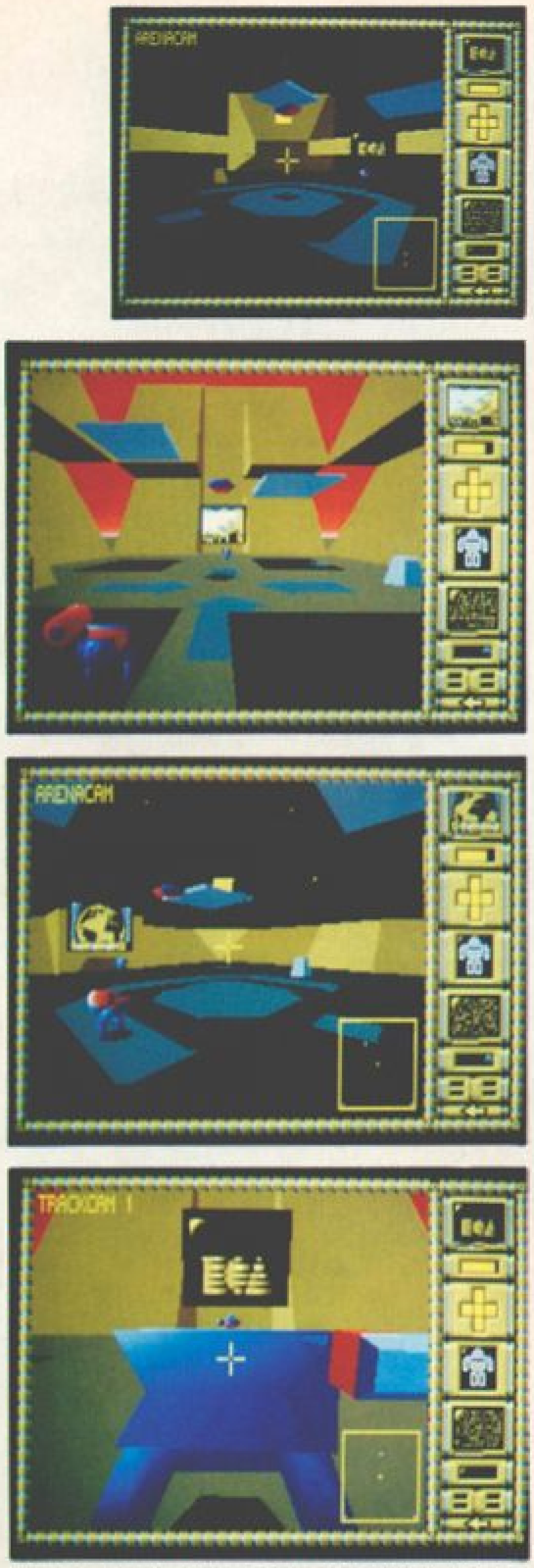
Meanwhile, Ocean is showing the Gameboy adaption of *Robocop 2* at the Consumer Electronics Show at Chicago. ACE hopes to bring you an on-location report next month.

COLONISATION OF CYBERNETICS

With all this robot-inspired innovation, what can we expect to see in the coming decades?

There's not too much to worry about at the moment, leading technologists in the field are still trying to build a robot that can walk up and down a flight of stairs without the assistance of any human. The real world is just too complex for the average cybernaut. That will gradually change, though.

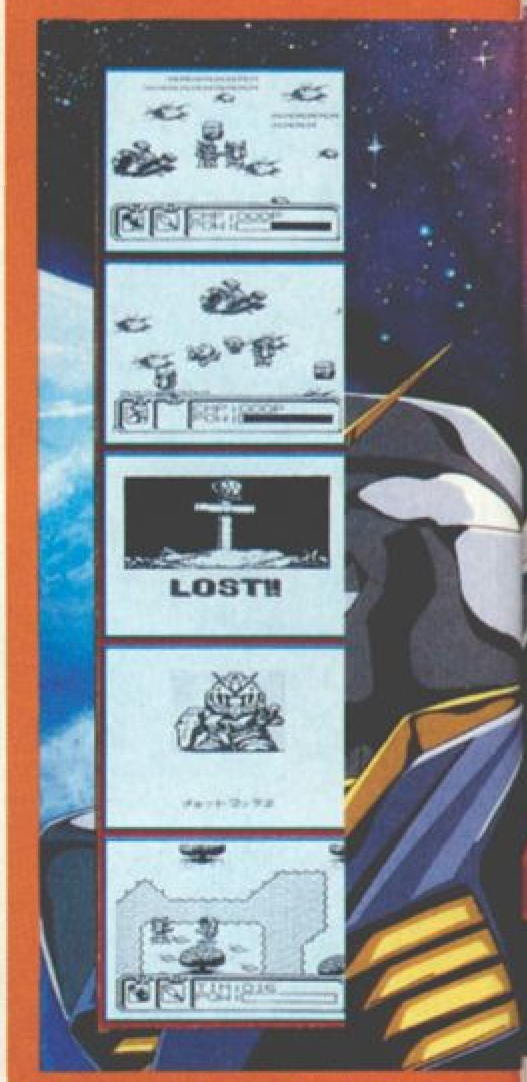
The Robocop film character of today could become the armed and armoured traffic warden of tomorrow. Parking on a double yellow line in the London of 2027 could be very risky indeed. Especially if the harmless wheel clamp is replaced by a quick burst of 20mm cannon as the ultimate deterrent. And you thought The Terminator was mean?



(Above *top to bottom*) Cyber Fight (working title) should push back the state-of-the-art in PC graphics when its released later in 1991. This one- or two-player battlesim takes the theme of gladiators fighting in an arena and updates it through the use of exo-skeletons, wire-guided missiles and computer-aided radar vision.

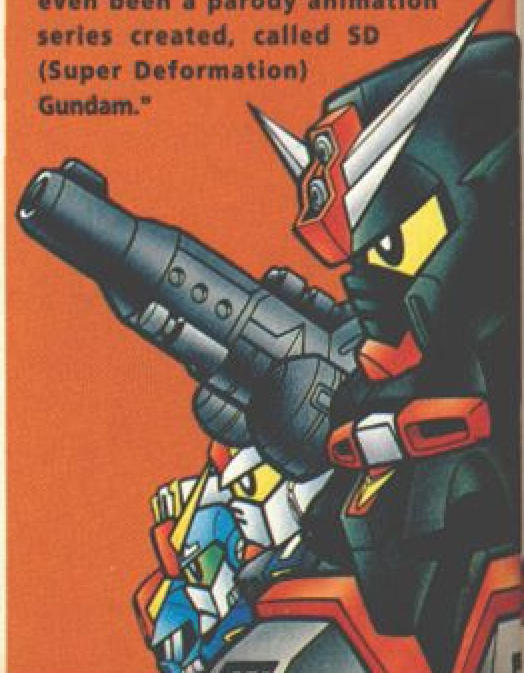
With an Amiga adaption already underway, there's a good chance that Electronic Arts will commission Cyber Fight conversions to the Megadrive and Super Famicom. By the way, one of the fancy graphics techniques incorporated into the game can be seen in the far wall. Programmer Michael Powell uses 'Texture Mapping' to project the moving television images on the screen. Very clever.

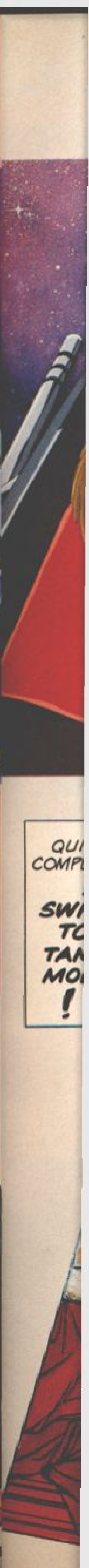
EA's Cyber Fight from Powerdrome author Michael Powell, has elements of Robocop, Robert Heinlein's 1959 novel (Starship Troopers) and the Japanese Gundam concept of an armoured suit or piloted exoskeleton. With the likes of Cyber Fight, Robocop 3 and Terminator 2 – robot games could be dominating the charts this Christmas...



GUNDAM MOBILE SUIT

This epic Japanese saga created by Yoshiyuki Tomino began as an animated television series in 1979 and has since grown into a self-perpetuating industry of video games, books, films, toys and comics. "Tomino's Gundam series marked the beginning of the 'robot fever' that has swept both Japan and the USA," says publisher Ballantine Books. "The Mobile Suit is the prototype for all the realistic robots we've encountered in the past ten years. An entire generation of Japanese has been raised on the Gundam stories and images, but the ultimate testimony to the concept's success is that there has even been a parody animation series created, called SD (Super Deformation) Gundam."





DAY OF THE DROIDS

QUIT COMPLAINING!
SWITCH TO TANK MODE!

AAH!
GUNHED! START THE ELEVATOR!

GUNHED

Japan's answer to The Terminator has proved to be a huge hit in the Far East with, you've probably guessed it, a wide variety of tie-in book and toy products to feed off this interest. Gunhed, not to be confused with the superlative PC Engine game, is similar in concept to Gundam and Robotech and includes plenty of impressive looking mecha to satisfy the techno-sadists. A big Japanese hit in 1989, the live-action movie will be released in America and possibly Europe later in the year. Gunhed: The Movie combined the talents of many famous Japanese film-folk. Special visual effects artist Koichi Kawakita studied under Eiji Tsuburaya, the man who created Godzilla. In Viz Select Comics Gunhed Issue 3, Kawakita says his most difficult creation for Gunhed was the devastating fight scene between Gunhed and Aerobot – the climatic highlight of the move.

THE BIG 50 ...continued

PHIL HARRISON

Job Title: Product Manager, Mindscape

Status Report: Joining Mindscape at its conception of its UK branch, Phil has risen as the company's stature has grown. Now he chooses who to employ from the large list of people queuing up to program for Mindscape.

Strengths: Delegates like a good 'un getting the staff below him working away ultra efficiently. And he's got a Sierra Cosworth!

Weaknesses: Sometimes he can be a little over enthusiastic when it comes to relating tales of past acheivements.

What To Watch For: Mindscape is all geared up to produce a bundle of NES and Super Famicom stuff under Phil's direction.

BOB HAY

Job Title: Head of FAST

Status Report: Under Bob Hay's direction FAST have continued in their ceaseless fight against the scourge of computer piracy. The last year has seen FAST's sights sensibly drift away from the obvious target of the home computer hacker to concentrate more and more on corporate piracy.

Strengths: As an ex-copper Bob looks more than a bit tasty, and those who have received early-morning raids from Bob and his Constabulary friends will testify to his determination.

Weaknesses: There was that "£1000 to shop your mates" FAST add campaign which surprised many with its greed-motivated angle.

What To Watch For: Even greater success and an increasing number of prosecutions.

STUART DINSEY

Job Title: Editor, Computer Trade Weekly

Status Report: CTW's mix of authority and gossip makes it only trade paper really worth reading and Stuart's involvement since becoming Editor has cemented the paper's position.

Strengths: Sharp and brighter than brand new pin. His head-writing skills come from the Innuendo school of journalism often resulting in riotous consequences!

Weaknesses: Stuart oftens tend to focus on trivial ambiguities at the expense of the bigger picture. Some have aimed criticisms of word-twisting at him too.

What To Watch For: More of the same.

ERIC MATTHEWS

Job Title: Head man, The Bitmap Brothers

Status Report: Produced *Speedball II* for Mirrorsoft, then forged links with Renegade. Put together *Gods* for the new firm, and is currently working on *Magic Pockets.*

Strengths: Still the young punters' number one software star - mainly due to the valliant efforts of Mirrorsoft's hype machine. Never out of the magazines. Rubs shoulders with the likes of Tim Simenon and Betty Boo.

Weaknesses: Rubs shoulders with Tim Simenon and Betty Boo. The Bitmaps inevitably set themselves up for a critical grilling by over-hyping their product. *Gods* was good, but not the miracle promised, and if *Pockets* isn't any better, interest in Bros could well plummet. Maybe his Eric'sminutes are up.

What To Watch For: *Magic Pockets.*

ANIL GUPTA

Job Title: Managing Director, Anco

Status Report: *Kick Off 2* propelled Anil from simple popularity to super-stardom. Rumour has it many big-time publishers have been begging him to allow them to produce data disks. Made some impressive big-time console deals with the Japanese that will put *Kick Off* on the Super FamiCom, GameBoy and everything else!

Strengths: Enough good business sense to make money on a string of mediocre trivia and strip-poker games for years

33

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Laserdisks come in two sizes and two colours: 30cm and 20cm, giving up to 120 minutes of video and superb digital sound on the gold disks (silver disks are analogue sound only)

LASERDISK BACK

Dirk Neuen's pride and joy is a £100 Laserdisk version of *2001 A Space Odyssey*. This little number not only features a digitally remastered version of the famous movie (including a subtle correction of red colourcast on the original celluloid) but also includes footage of Arthur C Clarke discussing the future of space exploration, NASA footage of the Jupiter fly-bys of Voyager 1 and 2, hundreds of visual, textual, and audio mementoes concerning the making of the original film, and a special montage of images from the film together with space footage and narrative. The film is presented in the original wide-screen format and the quality, played back on a Pioneer CLD1500 laserdisk player, is astounding.

Great for film buffs, but if you're itching for a little interaction, the thing that's really going to get you excited is the 3.5" disk sitting beside the disk player and the little black lead coming out of the back. These small additions put the whole glorious kaboodle under the direct control of your Amiga 500, ST, or PC – and that's just the beginning...

It all started when Dirk was lounging in front of his TV watching a laserdisk video. His eyes strayed to the Amiga on the sideboard and it suddenly occurred to him that it might be interesting to connect the two together. After all, games like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* had originally been designed for laserdisk systems. If he could cobble some kind of interface together, perhaps he could get some old game disks and create his own laserdisk arcade machine.

This led to the first Software Corner Lasergames interface, now available in Germany for £65. Using this gadget, you can connect a Pioneer CLD1500 or 1450 to your micro and play away at any laserdisk game to your heart's content without having to fork out numerous 50p bits. What's more, laserdisk games don't stop at *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* – see the panel in this feature for more information on titles.

The Lasergames interface is a nice little niche product for games enthusiasts, but then Software Corner began to get ambitious and their next development goes a lot further into the realms of advanced computer entertainment. Dirk and his colleagues reckoned it would be possible, using the particular capabilities of the Pioneer machine, to produce an interface that would enable the unit to be used as a CD-ROM drive – with, of course, the added advantage of Laserdisk video and enhanced CD audio sound.

Having come up with that idea, it was a short step to the concept of a CDTV emulation system for Amiga owners who wanted to upgrade to CDTV but might also fancy the advantages of laserdisk movies. In theoretical terms, this wouldn't be impossible; it would, however,

The machine that makes it all possible: the Pioneer CLD1500 and (inset) the unique Pioneer sub-code interface that made it practical for Software Corner to adapt the player for computer control and CDTV emulation

(Inset) The Pioneer CLD1500's multi-disk platter, so you can enjoy CDs, CD videos, and laserdisk movies all from one machine. And if Software Corner's system delivers everything it promises, you'll be able to drop a CD-ROM in the centre slot as well...

> 'I've been a fan of this system since 1981 – *if you want the* highest possible quality movies at home, it's got no equal.'
>
> Dirk Neuen, Software Corner

LASERDISK COMEBACK?

The original Laserdisk standard was launched as a consumer product by Philips in 1981 after a couple of years confinement to professional interactive video markets. Unlike other optical disk formats (which are almost all digital), laserdisk combines digital and analogue media, giving you on the one hand the high fidelity of CD digital audio and, on the other, the high frame rate and colour bandwidth of analogue video. For watching movies, it's unbeatable in terms of quality and (compared to tapes) convenience.

Traditionally, the only drawback has been the price. When they first appeared, laserdisk players cost around £1000 and the disks weren't cheap either, with premium titles costing well over £100. By 1985, the laserdisk market was practically dead, although the *format lingered on thanks to strong support* from Pioneer and a continued interest in the interactive video training world. By the Christmas of 1985, you could pick up a discounted player in the shops for as little as £150.

Meanwhile, the system had been adopted by Atari for use in the arcades and this continued until around 1988 – by which time

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DISKOPAEDIA

Compact Disk is familiar to almost everybody now, giving a cleaner sound and increased playback options using digital audio recording and playback techniques. There are however two other disk formats that can be played using a multi-format machine like the Pioneer CLD1500/1450.

First, you've got CDV (CD Video). These disks are 12cm size and are essentially a crossbreed between CD and Laserdisk. They hold analogue video tracks capable of giving up to six minutes of colour video together with digital sound (encoded in CLV mode) plus another 20 minutes of extended digital audio play.

The you've got the Laserdisks themselves. These come in two sizes and two formats: 30cm and 20cm, and CAV and CLV (see the main text for explanations of these terms). CAV disks are used for standard play, giving 72 minutes of video on a 30cm disk and 32 minutes on a 20cm disk. CLV gives you extended playing times of 120 minutes and 40 minutes respectively.

CAV doesn't just mean shorter playing times, however. This format makes up for the reduced capacity by offering the very useful multispeed and still/step play functions. You can also access any individual frame and get a perfect, flicker-free freeze frame display of it.

LD's can store sound either digitally or in analogue format. You can easily tell which is which: gold disks are digital and silver disks are analogue.

Finally, it's worth remembering that imported disks (often featuring the newest titles) store video in NTSC format. British television systems, however, are dedicated to the PAL format. To get around this, Pioneer also manufacture a (more expensive) model called the CLD1450, which automatically detects which standard is used and adjusts itself accordingly – so you can play almost any video movie from the USA, Japan, or Europe without worrying about video formats.

Left Inset: Audio CD's: 74 minutes of audio on the 12cm size and 20 minutes on the 8cm 'singles'

Above Right Inset': CDV: 26 minutes of digital sound and six minutes of video, available in 12cm format only

involve not only perfecting the CD-ROM interface, but also getting hold of the Commodore CDTV operating software. The first step is already being taken, but naturally Commodore are not going to fall over themselves to provide Dirk and his friends with copies of the CDTV ROMs, so the only possibility is to 'reverse engineer' this software – i.e. develop independently a set of routines that, although they exactly mirror the functions of the Commodore software, do not in any way copy the code or otherwise infringe on Commodore's copyright.

This work is now underway and Software Corner are planning to have the first prototype on demonstration by the time you read this. The full system is planned for launch in early July at around £145 and you'll be able to check out a full exclusive review in ACE. If it's all it's cracked up to be, it could turn out be an attractive alternative for existing Amiga owners who would like not only CDTV capability but also a state-of-the-art video and CD player to boot. PC and ST owners could benefit too, from having a good CD-ROM peripheral with the same additional features. Laserdisk systems, it seems, could be due for a comeback...

HOW TO GO LASERDISK!

Software Corner are currently in the process of appointing a British distributor – but in the meantime you can contact them direct at the following address/telephone number:

Software Corner
Augartenstrasse 6
6800 Mannheim
West Germany
Telephone: 010 49 621 40 23 87
or 010 49 621 44 36 32

manufacturers had formed the International Laserdisk Association in Hamburg. Companies like Sony, Panasonic, and Pioneer got together to support the medium and began to persuade software providers (especially the film and music video businesses) to produce more titles. Since by this time the piracy of video tape had become a critical problem, publishers looked more favourably on laserdisk and support began to grow.

By 1990, the market boasted around 10000 titles in Japan and 12000 titles in the USA. Even more importantly, new films began to be released on laserdisk very soon after their appearance on the cinema circuit in America, so enthusiasts in Europe were able to see the latest films before they arrived from the States. This, combined with the growing sophistication of players, has led to the market growing in size – in particular in France and Germany, with the UK still lagging behind.

Laserdisk prices are now coming down, with Pioneer's top of the range CLD1450 costing around £500 and the CLD1500 costing £400 in the UK – rather more, relatively speaking, than they cost in the rest of Europe which further explains why us Brits aren't snapping them up to such an extent. Costs are likely to fall still further later this year, for the disks as well as the hardware.

One of the advantages of the latest generation of laserdisk players is their ability to read both CAV and CLV disk formats. Those of you who got last month's free ACE techno-guide will know that this refers to two different techniques of reading disks: constant angular and constant linear velocity. CAV is used by traditional LPs, and means the platter spins at a constant rate so that the area under the read head travels at a varying speed (the tracks at the edge of the disk being longer than those near the centre). In CLV systems, the area under the read maintains the same relative speed at all times because the system increases the RPM as the head approaches the central, shorter tracks.

Because both these systems can be handled by some of the modern systems (which will also accept varying sizes of disk), some new generation laserdisk players could become useful peripherals for computer systems, reading CD ROM's as well as traditional CD audio disks AND laser video movies. You can find out more technical details on Laserdisk, particularly the Pioneer CLD1500, in the competition section of this feature.

THE BIG 50

...continued

before *Kick Off* ever came along. He successfully turned *Kick Off* into the phenomenon it deserved to be.
Weaknesses: How long can he carry on milking *Kick Off?* We're promised more data disks and *Player Manager 2*, but then what?
What To Watch For: *Tip Off* - Kick Off on a basketball court, from Steve Screech. *Player Manager 2.*

ANDREW WRIGHT

Job Title: Product Director, Virgin Games
Status Report: A good year. Bought up all the old *Infocom* titles and cleaned up punting them out at a tenner a throw.
Strengths: Knows a good thing when he sees one. That comes from years of experience at Activision, Mirrorsoft and Thalamus. Has the courage of his convictions, and isn't afraid to whip up a bit of controversy when it's needed (*Floor 13, Conflict*) **Weaknesses:** A little volatile at times. Rarely on time for social events. Gets bored easily. Sometimes a little too big for his Doc Martens.
What To Watch For: His pet projects, *Floor 13* and *Realms.* Another shrewd approach to flogging budget software after the initial *Infocom* success.

JEREMY SMITH

Job Title: Managing Director, Core Design.
Status Report: Took his independent development company and transformed it into a high-profile software house. The first release, *Corporation,* ransacked the charts and shot him to stardom. Since then he's done the business with *Torvak, Car-Vup* and now *Chuck Rock.*
Strengths: A happy-go-lucky attitude coupled with good hands-on business sense is Smith's recipe for success. Has a good eye for games after years developing for Gremlin. Excellent press image.
Weaknesses: Despite the success of Core, it's still only a tiny firm, and Jeremy needs to be careful - one big turkey could be disastrous. Must beware of biting off more than he can chew, as Core seems to have an awful lot in the pipeline at the moment.
What To Watch For: Company expansion. *Corp. 2.*

MARK CALE

Job Title: Managing Director, System 3
Status Report: Broke links with Activision, somewhat acrimoniously - and then nothing much happened. *Flimbo's Quest, Vendetta, Last Ninja 3* all turned up at long last, (apart from *Ninja 3*).
Strengths: Knows what the punters like to play, and isn't afraid to give it to them. Managed to sustain mega-shrewd and affluent image through tough times.
Weakesses: Reputed to have a fiery temperament. The transition from kings of 8-Bit to a 16-Bit company isn't proving easy.
What To Watch For: *Last Ninja 4?*

JEZ SAN

Job Title: Managing Director, Argonaut Software
Status Report: Got Hawk finished at last after four years. Changed its name to *Birds of Prey.* Handled mediocre *Days of Thunder* for Mindscape. Increased console commitment.
Strengths: Still holds on to high-calibre industry profile, despite damaging repercussions of so-so product. Ever so quotable
Weaknesses: *Days of Thunder* proved the *Afterburner* days aren't over yet.
What To Watch For: *Birds of Prey,* which should put him back on the map. His top secret 3D Nintendo project for the US.

DEAN BARRETT

Job Title: Head of Nintendo Marketing Europe, Ocean
Status Report: Getting to work straight away, Dean has already played part in stitching up the NES *Battletoads* license from American giants Tradewest.

☞35

LASERDISK BACK

GAMES GALORE

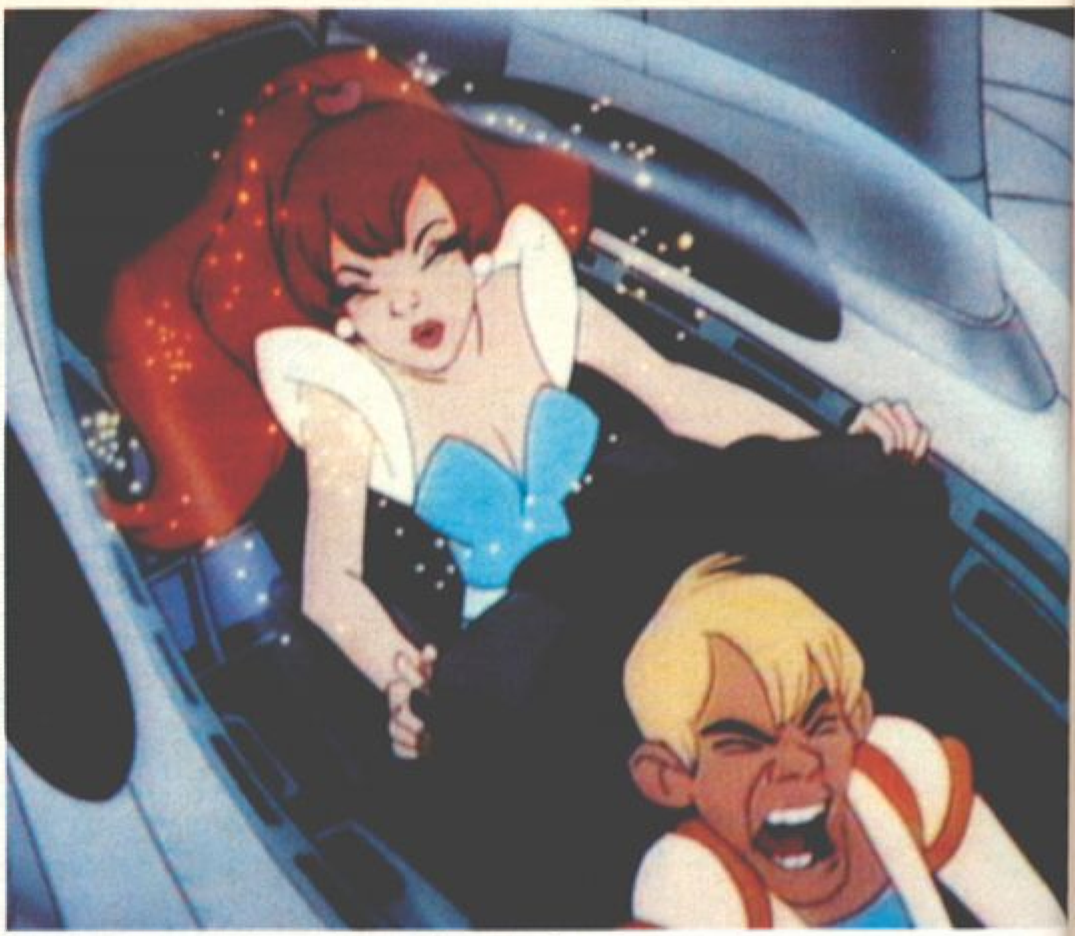
Most people have heard of Dragon's Lair and Space Ace, but in fact the laserdisk format boasts a lot more titles than you might think. Currently there are 64 laserdisk games with new releases now occurring on a regular basis. Thirty four of these titles have currently been licensed for use with the Software Corner system.

Titles currently available include Dragon's Lair, Firefox, Space Ace, a couple of X-rated strip disks called Casino Royale 1 & 2, and – coming soon – a superb conversion of Super Hang On.

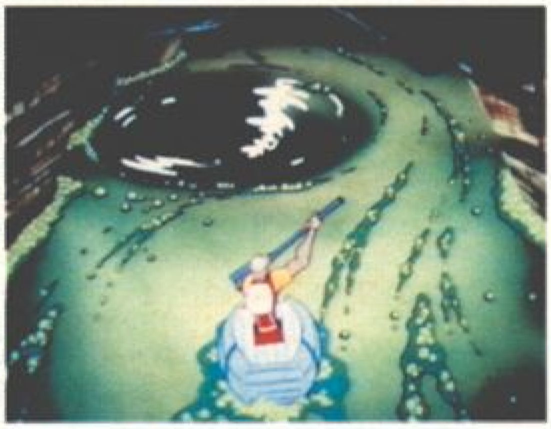
The early laserdisk games simply fetched different sequences from the disk according to the action you took with the joystick. Furthermore, the old hardware systems were very slow at locating the right sequence, resulting in periodic 'black outs' as the laser looked for the next scene.

On modern players, the access time is far, far quicker. What's more, many of today's games combine disk output with graphic output from your computer to generate a composite image that is much more in tune with modern gameplay techniques. For example, in Super Hang On, the Amiga would generate the bike in the foreground and the laserdisk generates the scrolling scenery and other machines. As a result you get a very fast display with graphics every bit as good as the arcade version.

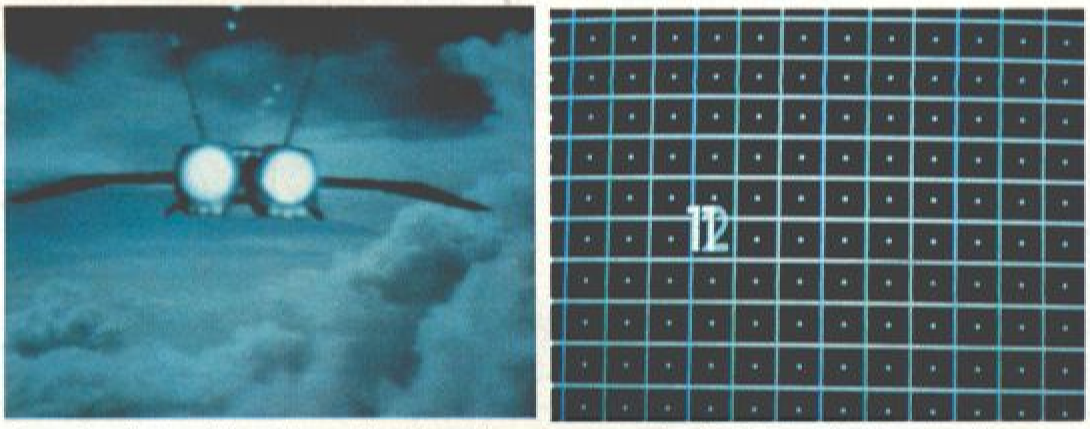
As with CD ROM, all laserdisk games have the option to include superb sound tracks – NTSC laserdisk systems have no less than four audio tracks (two digital and two analogue), and even PAL machines (which require more data for the larger PAL format display and so can have fewer sound tracks) have digital stereo of CD quality.



(Above)
Watch out for the Infanto Ray! Our hero loses a few wrinkles after the wicked Borf manages to get in a blast with the age-reducing weapon you must destroy in Space Ace



(Left)
Negotiating the underground river obstacles in Dragon's Lair. The disk is arranged so that most associated sequences are stored close together, minimising the time it takes for the laser to find the next scene. Scenes are also duplicated on the disk to further minimise access times, and modern players can reduce the waiting time to a fraction of a second



A scene from Firefox, which combines real live video with computer generated graphics. The inset shot shows the grid system used by the game to communicate with the computer, informing it which sector of the screen is currently occupied by the enemy...

Dirk Neuen takes another order for the new system at the Software Corner shop: 'Ever since the first article about the system appeared in Germany, the phone hasn't stopped ringing...'

The Software Corner Lasergames interface package, giving you all you need to play the original Dragon's Lair and up to 33 other games currently licensed for the system

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EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION!

Win a Software Corner games interface AND a superb Pioneer CLD1500 Laserdisk player

Software Corner are offering ACE readers an exclusive chance to win this tremendous lasergames system. You'll get an interface for your machine (PC, ST, or Amiga), interface software, a copy of Dragons Lair, AND a fabulous CLD1500 Laserdisk player – so you'll be able to enjoy not only the games, but also the vast numbers of premium movie titles available on laserdisk.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO...

To put yourself at the forefront of video technology, you must face up to a series of challenges that will place awesome demands on your physical and mental resources. These challenges are listed below, followed by THE QUESTION. Here goes...

1. Find a pen or biro.
2. Master written English, in particular the use of BLOCK CAPITALS.
3. Locate a postcard or envelope manufactured before 1485BC. If you can't find one, any old postcard or envelope will do.
4. Assume a pose of intense concentration.
5. Meditate upon THE QUESTION
6. Inscribe upon the postcard (or the back of the envelope – no sealed entries, please), in block capitals, your name, your address, the machine you own, your age, and the answer to THE QUESTION. Think carefully before you complete this task.
7. Master the ancient martial art of Bushido (This step can be omitted, but it may help with Challenge Number 7 below).
8. Find a stamp – or a person who is both weaker than you are and in possession of a stamp.
9. Stick the stamp upon the postcard or envelope and address it to: ACE Laserdisk Competition, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.
10. Find a postbox and push the stamped entry through the slot to arrive before the closing date of July 8th.

THE QUESTION

How many Laserdisk games are currently licensed for the Software Corner system?

THE RULES

1. No employee of EMAP Images, Software Corner, or their associated companies may enter.
2. The winner of the first prize will be the first correct qualifying entry drawn at random. The next ten entries drawn will receive the runners-up prizes.
3. Only one entry per household. Multiple entries will be disqualified.
4. All entries must be received by the closing date of July 8th 1991. Results will be announced in ACE issue 48.

THE PIONEER CLD1500...

This little beauty accepts 30cm and 20cm laserdisks (CAV and CLV), any CD including 8cm 'singles', and any 12cm CDV (see the Diskopaedia panel elsewhere for details of these formats).

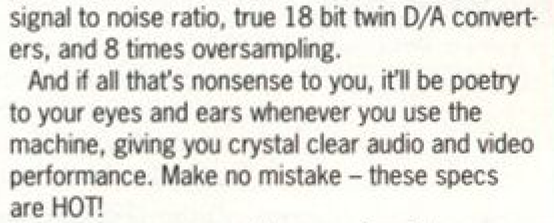
Not only that, buy you get stunning performance: 4-20,000Khz audio with 105dB signal to noise ratio, true 18 bit twin D/A converters, and 8 times oversampling.

And if all that's nonsense to you, it'll be poetry to your eyes and ears whenever you use the machine, giving you crystal clear audio and video performance. Make no mistake – these specs are HOT!

Furthermore, you get dozens of useful playback options, including...

- programme play of up to 24 tracks (or 'chapters' on video disks)
- multispeed play, including still and step frame on CAV disks
- CD auto programme edit
- random play and/or random repeat
- no less than seven repeat modes, including 2-point, track, memory, programme
- 10-key direct search and play of chapters on LD and tracks on CD/CDV
- frame number search for LD's and time/number search for CDs
- full remote control

...and so much more that we couldn't fit it all in!



The Pioneer CLD1500 – state-of-the-art optical disk performance and yours FREE if you strike it lucky in our exclusive competition!

THE BIG 50

...continued

Strengths: A reasoned and intelligent manner belies his tender age of twenty six and when it comes to dealing with the big boys Dean's more than adequately armed.
Weaknesses: Ladies' man.
What To Watch For: Ocean's image to recover after a slump during their time without Griffiths and Stokes thanks to Dean's appointment.

IAN RICHARDSON

Job Title: PR Manager, Gremlin
Status Report: Big-drinking Ian is a journo's PR man if ever there was one. Pushed Gremlin's many racing games to good effect and organised excellent bashes to boot.
Strengths: *Always* on the phone. *Always* out and about. Knows his product and plays the magazine game well.
Weaknesses: Goes through petty cash expenses like a hot knife through butter.
What To Watch For: A follow up to *Lotus*, a couple of big licences and increased power within the firm.

DANIELLE WOODYATT

Job Title: PR Manager, US Gold
Status Report: Soldiered on through a so-so year. Made plenty of noise about the *Godfather* deal. Didn't do a bad job of the Delphine signing either.
Strengths: Extrovert personality, likes a laugh. Organises the best press outings and an old hand at buttering up cynical journos. Good contacts both here and abroad.
Weaknesses: Occasionally let down by the product.
What To Watch For: Woody PR-ing a truly excellent product.

CATHY CAMPOS

Job Title: Publicity Machine, Mirrorsoft
Status Report: Helped push the Bitmap Brothers to new heights of superstardom before they went to Renegade. Pulled strings to get journos into special screenings of *Back To The Future Part III* and *Turtles*. No such luck with *Flight of the Intruder* or *Predator 2*, though.
Strengths: Diligent worker, excellent contacts both here and abroad. Genuine enthusiasm for good product. Good for getting industry gossip.
Weaknesses: "Can I call you back?"
What To Watch For: More of the same.

PAM GRIFFITHS

Job Title: Group PR Manager, Mindscape International
Status: Left high-profile Ocean PR job to join Mindscape. Got the company's PR act in order in a couple of short months.
Strengths: Knows everyone. Knows how to shmooze journalists.
Weaknesses: "She's not in right now. "
What To Watch For: The Mindscape name becoming more prominent in Pam's capable hands.

CLARE EDGELEY

Job Title: Marketing Manager, Domark
Status Report: Played a blinder fronting Domark's product over the last year.
Strengths: Genuinely enthusiastic about the products she pushes. Sense of humour. Knows a fair bit about games too - do you know she invented *Carrier Command?*
Weaknesses: Always rushed off her feet. More balls in the air than a very good juggler. Inevitably some things simply get forgotten.
What To Watch For: More of the same.

PETE STONE

Job Title: Managing Director, Palace Software
Status Report: Was saved from oblivion when Palace's parent company lost interest to French firm Leisure Holdings, who now pull the strings. Lost Delphine Games to US Gold.

☞37

Soldiers of

Will South London lager louts swap their knuckle dusters for ray guns? Rik Haynes looks at the latest in laser larks...

Peckham seems an unlikely place to enjoy 'the ultimate sci-fi adventure'. Have the Peckham Pride regulars started a pub quiz? Nope, there's a new game in town and its name is *Laser Quest.*

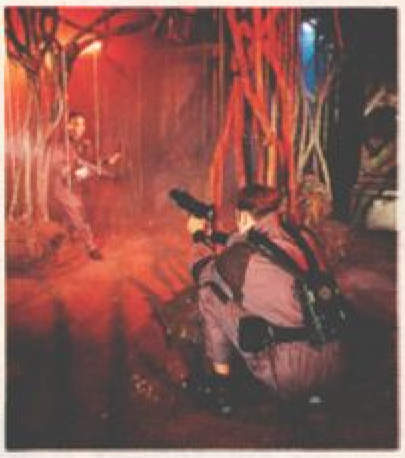
Three enterprising students from Bradford University think they've come up with the perfect solution to those tiresome paintball treks around the countryside. By replacing the splurge guns with techno-zappers, *Laser Quest* can bring the fun of the fight to your high-street. What you actually do is a little more low-tech: shoot everything in sight!

"The game is played out within an indoor space-age arena, we call it The Labyrinth," establishes a spokesperson. "Using laser guns linked to computerised target body packs, the game takes the form of 21st century Cowboys and Indians. Players zap each other either individually or in teams with hits being recorded on the body packs. The lowest score individually or across a team gives the eventual winner."

One of the Directors, Philip Pickersgill, explains that The Labyrinth arena is built around a scaffolding-type structure with a series of ramps. These are placed on different levels allowing players to move up and down. There are also 'themed areas' with lots of walls and panels for players to hide behind. "In conjunction with set builders Art Attack, we've built a playing area that recreates a science fiction film set. Using a variety of materials, the playing arena can be built around an appropriate theme and to a realistic budget," says the firm. After his visit to the *Laser Quest* site in Manchester, one journalist likened The Labyrinth to the set of Lost in Space.

Players environmental stimuli is cranked up. *Laser Quest*'s fully programmed environment incorporates a dark smoky atmosphere enhanced with fluorescent paints, black scenery, spotlights and some strobe lights. Music and/or sound effects are played in the background to add effect like they would in a movie. These have been commissioned especially by *Laser Quest* and are described as 'really freaky' with things like heartbeats getting louder.

Laser Quest's founding fathers formed the company in October 1989. "We'd seen the concept in other countries like the USA, Australia and New Zealand," offers Pickersgill. Laser Questing is apparently very popular down-under. So he first spent five months learning the tricks of the trade, running a Melbourne operation. "Designing our own gear took about two-and-a-half months and roughly nine months of profit. We won a DTI grant which also contributed towards the cost."



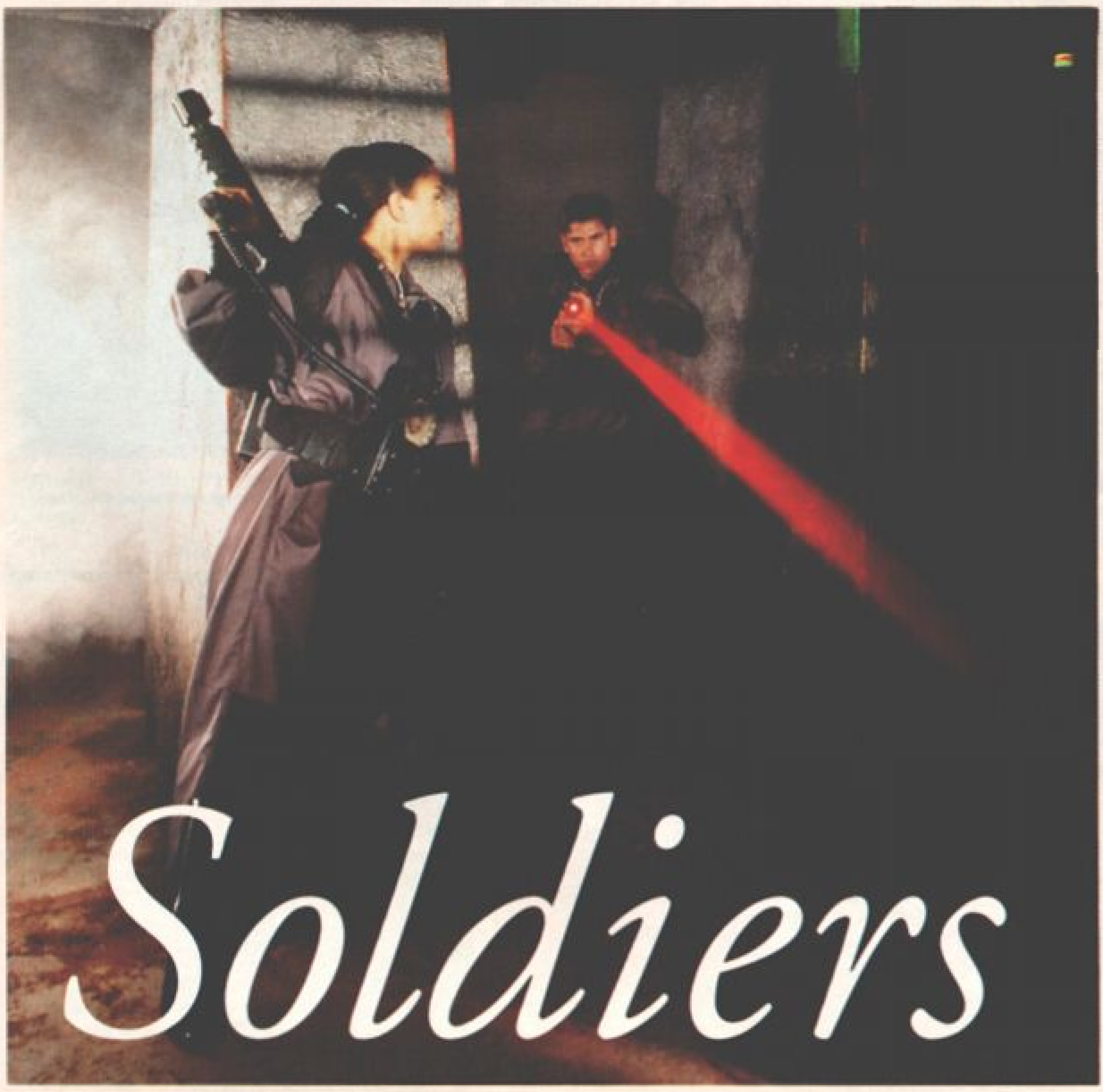
Surprisingly, the technology hasn't been imported from the States or Far East. "Our laser packs are the most advanced equipment in the games market today," continues the spokesperson, "Research and development is done hand-in-hand with our customers, ensuring that our commitment to continuous innovation and development will always lead the field."

Pickersgill wryly adds: "It has to take the punishment of the general public. It's certainly not simple but we're not talking NASA standards. It shoots a laser beam and infrared code to signal 'hits'. The packs contain a 68000 processor to handle the hardware and keep players scores. The guns 'n' packs cost approximately £2000 per person."

At the end of each session, players are given a personalised scoresheet detailing their microprocessed marksmanship. As the information is stored as a DOS file, the scoresheet is very detailed. Players get a list of everyone that hit them and where they were hit (front, back or on the gun). Different points are allocated to players scores depending on this position.

"We're constantly improving the playability of *Laser Quest.* One of the plus factors is that the system is software based. It's very flexible in terms of the games that you can play. In other words we're not limited to any one particular game variant. We've got a menu-driven master computer that can change, say, the amount of ammunition players have, the numbers of lives or the amount of times they can be hit. We can change the colours on the packs so players can have different team combinations. In the new venue in Peckham we've got headquarter units for each of the teams in addition to ammunition replenishers."

Up to 30 people can play at a time. Each game lasts only fifteen minutes, so there's a fast turnaround of punter. Before they start, customers are briefed on how to use the equipment and the rules of the game. There are also instructions on safety regulations. There's no running, contact or climbing the scenery.



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Core business for *Laser Quest* is apparently within the 15-24 age range. "We get families coming down and loads of kids for birthday treats. We also run special rates for groups of people. Students, unemployed and shift-workers come in during the day. For the real addicts we have more advanced games from 11pm till late. Accidents do happen. I'm glad to say they're very rare. It normally occurs when people do something totally stupid like jumping off ramps that are 20ft high."

Laser Quest requires a covered space of just 3,500 square feet. Almost anywhere can be transformed into a palace of frenzied fire – old cinemas, disused sports halls and snooker halls inclusive. The Manchester site is, oddly enough, situated in a railway arch. These rather untechnical surroundings haven't deterred dedicated cyber clubers or even local celebs like *The Happy Mondays* and *Inspiral Carpets*. Could this explain the emergence of the Northern Indie rock-dance scene? Probably not.

Apart from the aforementioned outlets in the north and south of England, there are also two sites each in Dublin and Belfast. The entrance fee varies from two to four pounds. "Peckham is a much larger venue than those before. It's twice the size of the Manchester site. There's more for the players to explore when they get inside the 8,000 square feet. This is a 'destination site' with spin-off business coming from pool tables, coin-operated video games and a burger bar. This is the largest European venue of its type."

How does Pickersgill think *Laser Quest* compares to paintball games? "It has a much shorter time and much wider appeal. Six years-old and up. Ages for paintball games are much more restrictive. I think you get the same sort of buzz off both."

And what about talk of creating a live video game? "We've certainly got an angle on it. You know the thing with Virtual Reality, I think we're taking it from the other end. We're building it up from the physical world into an electronic world. It can be described as a video game brought to life but it's a lot of other things as well. It's a new sport."

"The future for us is developing a lot of outlets for *Laser Quest* and establishing it as a brand leader synonymous with the concept as it stands. The directors of *Laser Quest* are young and in-touch with the concept and the customers. We developing more and more devices inside the game area for people to interact with. We'll be developing this theme a lot more over the year. The whole thing is to provide the best game available and we'll make this our continual objective.We've also got a few sideways moves in the pipeline as well. I really can't say much more at this stage."

A National League for Laser Questers, quarterly newsletter and even International playoffs are currently on the cards. Will the Olympics be next? "I think there's a very good chance," declares Pickersgill.

"The only real way to fully appreciate this is to experience it at tirst hand," contends *Laser Quest*. There are bound to be hackers already working on devices to give themselves special sharpshooting skills or software-generated shields. Some people just don't know how to party!

Fun, frolics and a fast blast – what more could you possibly want? Urban warfare has just entered the next stage. Do you feel lucky? Well, do ya cyberpunk?

There's little danger of punters slipping away with any unauthorised mementos of their Laser Quest day out; just look at the *size* of that pistol!

If you're ready to become a sci-fi sharpshooter the latest venue is at 267 Rye Lane, near the Peckham BR Station. To find out more about Laser Quest call 061 228 2231 and tell them where you heard about it!

Laser Quest's *tech noir* environment is sure to get the players' pulses a-racing.

THE BIG 50

...continued

Didn't release much, and what did come out seemed to come and go without much recognition - remember *Voodoo Nightmare?*

Strengths: Pete will never go down without a fight. It looks as though the product line may be perking up at last with the interesting *Demoniak, Crystals of Arborea* and whatever goodies the new-found friendship with the French brings across the channel.

Weaknesses: Pete's product has a nasty habit of getting swamped and disappearing in the development maze (*Monster Museum, Amazing Astral Adventures*). Palace's direction seems a little uncertain at the moment, and Pete needs to do some hasty steering to get everything back on track.

What To Watch For: How much Palace's day-to-day operation changes under the hand of its new French masters.

TONY KAVANAGH

Job Title: Managing Director, Krisalis Software

Status Report: Successfuly sustained and expanded Krisalis Software over the last 12 months. Had biggest hit to date, *Manchester United* which sold 110,000 copies.

Strengths: Foresight - the ability to judge the market way ahead. And the ability to build on success.

Weaknesses: Fairly hit-and-miss success rate with product.

What To Watch For: Hands across the ocean?

PETER CALVER

Job Title: Managing Director, Audiogenic

Status Report: Canny deals with tricky puzzler *Loopz* has got that product to appear with varying success on NES, Gameboy, Arcade and even pub machines.

Strengths: Peter's longevity surpasses just about everybody else in the software world. As ELSPA treasurer, Peter enjoys a special sort of respect from other industry luminaries as their software uncle.

Weaknesses: Rumours of some disgruntled staff. The style of product Audiogenic have specialised in is somewhat parochial and not the sort of thing a world market welcomes with open arms.

What To Watch For: Super Famicom is the word currently on all software developers lips and Audiogenic were among the first in Europe to get development systems.

ROGER BENNETT

Job Title: General Secretary for ELSPA

Status Report: There aren't many companies out there not in sync with the ELSPA way of life but Roger is working on recruiting these Johnny come latelys. This year saw Ian Stewart's Gremlin join the fold.

Strengths: Roger's easy going manner and gentle humour stands him in good stead when it comes to wrangling out the finer points of complicated ELSPA issues.

Weaknesses: His silly pipe-smoking habit may diminish his respect'n'fear factor.

What To Watch For: More of the same.

CLIVE BISHOP

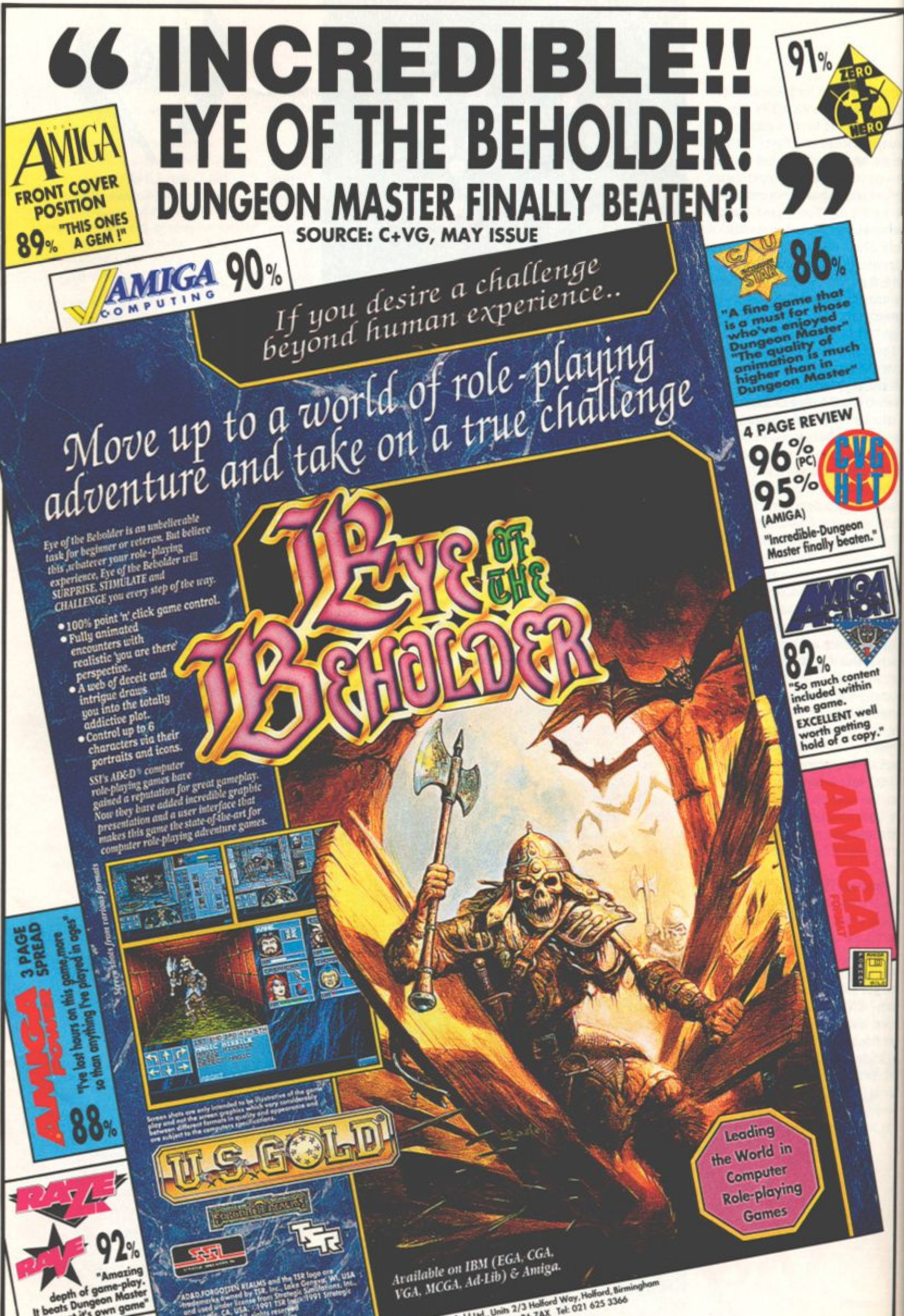
Job Title: Chairman of the National Association of Computer Retailers

Status Report: Clive's organisation is dedicated to putting forward the views and feelings of the many independent handy high street computer shops.

Strengths: When there's a computer retailer wrong to right Clive's in quick as a flash. His stoic nature is almost legendary.

Weaknesses: Maybe Clive's keen Scottie Dog spirit and his demand for details, facts and figures make Clive a bit of a prickly pear. Keen to tell everyone how long he's been in the business.

What to Watch For: More of the same.



" INCREDIBLE!! EYE OF THE BEHOLDER! DUNGEON MASTER FINALLY BEATEN?! "

SOURCE: C+VG, MAY ISSUE

AMIGA
FRONT COVER POSITION
89% "THIS ONES A GEM !"

AMIGA COMPUTING 90%

91% ZERO HERO

C+VG 86%
"A fine game that is a must for those who've enjoyed Dungeon Master" "The quality of animation is much higher than in Dungeon Master"

4 PAGE REVIEW
96% (PC)
95% (AMIGA)
CVG HIT
"Incredible-Dungeon Master finally beaten."

AMIGA ACTION
82%
"So much content included within the game. EXCELLENT well worth getting hold of a copy."

AMIGA FORMAT

AMIGA POWER
3 PAGE SPREAD
"I've lost hours on this game,more so than anything I've played in ages"
88%

RAZE
RAVE 92%
"Amazing depth of game-play. It beats Dungeon Master at it's own game"

If you desire a challenge beyond human experience..

Move up to a world of role-playing adventure and take on a true challenge

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

Eye of the Beholder is an unbelievable task for beginner or veteran. But believe this, whatever your role-playing experience, Eye of the Beholder will SURPRISE, STIMULATE and CHALLENGE you every step of the way.

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- A web of deceit and intrigue draws you into the totally addictive plot.
- Control up to 6 characters via their portraits and icons.

SSI's AD&D® computer role-playing games have gained a reputation for great gameplay. Now they have added incredible graphic presentation and a user interface that makes this game the state-of-the-art for computer role-playing adventure games.

Screen shots from various formats

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

U.S. GOLD

FORGOTTEN REALMS

SSI

TSR

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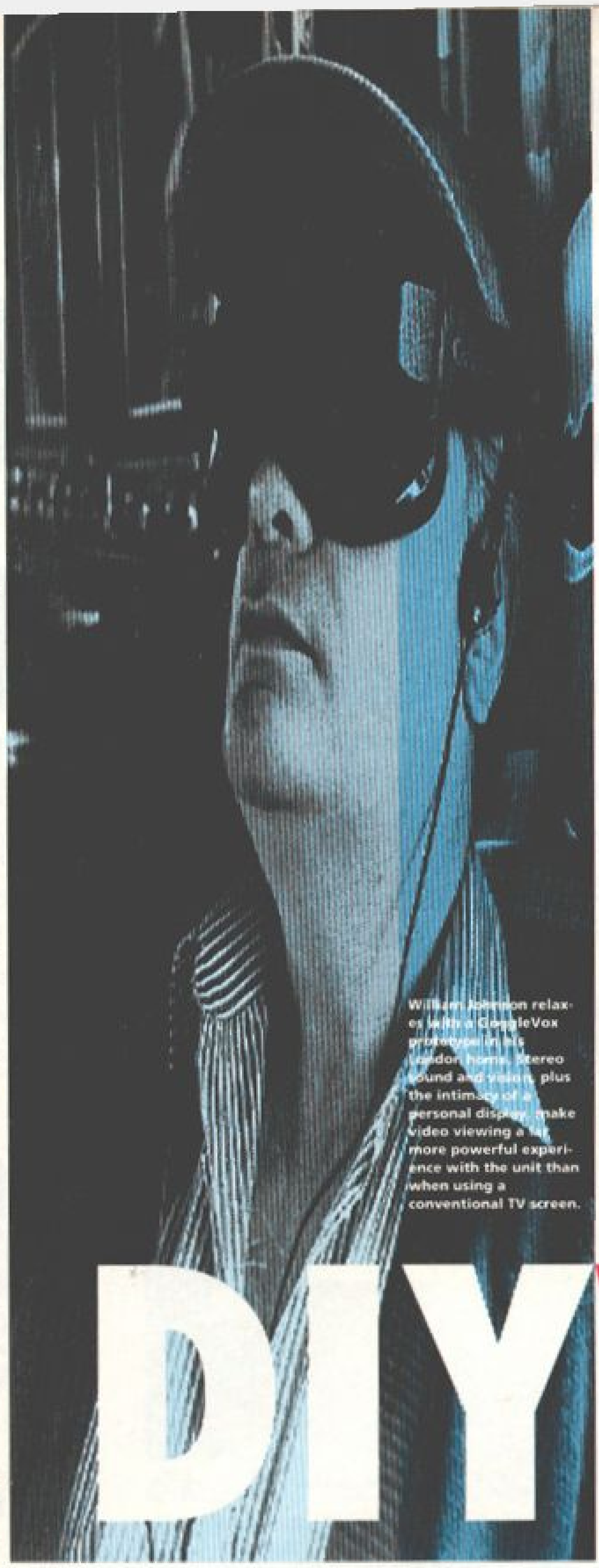
DIY VR!

Fancy a DIY VR system on your PC, Amiga, or ST? It could be closer than you think. Steve Cooke reports on the latest developments...



William Johnson relaxes with a GoggleVox prototype in his London home. Stereo sound and vision, plus the intimacy of a personal display, make video viewing a far more powerful experience with the unit than when using a conventional TV screen.

Us wimpy Brits entered the VR market way behind the Yankees and, with the exception of the fancy plastic injection moulded cases from W Industries, we haven't really added anything new to the formula.

Until now, that is. By the time you read this, Dimension International, who's Superscape system has already been covered in ACE, will have announced their *VR Toolkit* at the London Virtual Reality Conference – a system that offers major advances over similar products from Sense8 and VPL. You can read more about the *Toolkit* elsewhere on this page, and more about the conference in the next issue.

Furthermore, a British inventor by the name of William Johnson claims to have overcome one of the most serious drawbacks of VR systems – the limited resolution of the goggles.

William Johnson is in touch with a major hardware company in the computer entertainment field (a non-disclosure agreement prevents us from naming names, however) and many other VR developers are showing considerable interest in the GoggleVox (see below). And as for Dimension International, well – what would you expect from the company who turned their in-house Freescape games development system into the *3D Construction Kit*?

GOGGLEVOX

To date, one of the most hairiest bug-bears for VR developers has been the display. Think about it – if you plonk your nose up against a monitor displaying a pleasing resolution of, say, 600 by 400, what do you get? Loads of ugly great pixels, a display fragmented into red, green and blue dots, and a fried retina. Not a happy state of affairs.

Johnson has only an incidental interest in VR, but the man who's already won international awards for his inventions (including the Adidas Micropacer for joggers and, last year, a revolutionary new jet-ski called The Flying Frog) recently became fascinated by portable colour TVs. His idea was to take the screens, stick them together in a stereoscopic pair, and build them into a pair of goggles, providing airline passengers, sunworshippers, and council officials with something to do in their spare time: watch personal TV in stereo, without disturbing their environment.

Currently the maximum pixel resolution of portable colour LCD TV screens is around 110000 pixels, which would approximately equate in pixel terms to a computer display of around 400*300. In qualitative terms, the LCD display would appear to be in a higher resolution because of the smaller scale and the unlimited colour palette of analogue video. New models planned for this summer will push that figure up to around 425*325 – a noticeable improvement.

To overcome the fragmented display problem when using close range viewing in goggles, Johnson hit on the simple idea of adding a high quality diffuser. The first attempts simply ended up in blurred images. However, by carefully adjusting the distance between the eye and the screen, by carefully adjusting the focal length and performance of the intermediary focussing screen, and by careful specification and manufacture of the diffuser, Johnson has managed to come up with a display that is only a few degrees short of complete acceptability – and it offers a considerably higher resolution than most current VR goggle systems. The final production version of the GoggleVox, he tells us, will feature a new diffusion system and the unit is planned to sell for under £300 – which compares pretty well with the thousands of dollars required for the competition.

Provided that final, small leap in quality is achieved, there is little doubt that this system will emerge as a peripheral for at least one major 16-bit format in the very near future. Personal VR could be with us sooner than we think...

VR TOOLKIT

Meanwhile, with your GoggleVox strapped in place, how will you be generating your own virtual realities in glorious stereo vision?

Quite possibly with a scaled down version of Dimension International's *VR Toolkit*. This is the first VR system produced by games programmers (Dimension is part of the Incentive group) and it shows. First, instead of a complex series of C Routines (which is what you'd get with Sense8's *World Tool Kit*), you get an easy to use icon-driven VR editor. This gives you control over a host of interactive features, many of which – despite the professional market that the *VR Toolkit* is aimed at – hint broadly at games applications.

'Multiple Moving Objects with realistic physical movement model incorporating friction, gravity, collisions, and restitution...Objects may launch projectiles which can behave independently.'

Stick that in your architectural simulation, sonny. The system is currently tailored for a 486 PC and on that it delivers, amongst other things, a variable frame rate up to 70fps (a more realistic rate for complex environments at 50Hz would be around 15fps), a display of 640*480 with 256 colours, multiple mobile lightsources (perfect for multi-solar systems in deep space), powerful animation routines, and complete object interaction. You can scale your world in any unit you like, but supposing you assigned the value of 1 millimetre to the smallest element, the system could cope with – gasp – an environment the size of the British Isles. VR *Mega-Castlemaster* is just around the corner!

One attractive feature of the *VR Toolkit* is that – unlike most of its competitors – even the largest environments can be held as a single universe, rather than having to link them together using gateways. Thus the designer can create transparent windows within buildings that actually look out onto the street.

DOUBLE VALUE F

TWO DISKS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

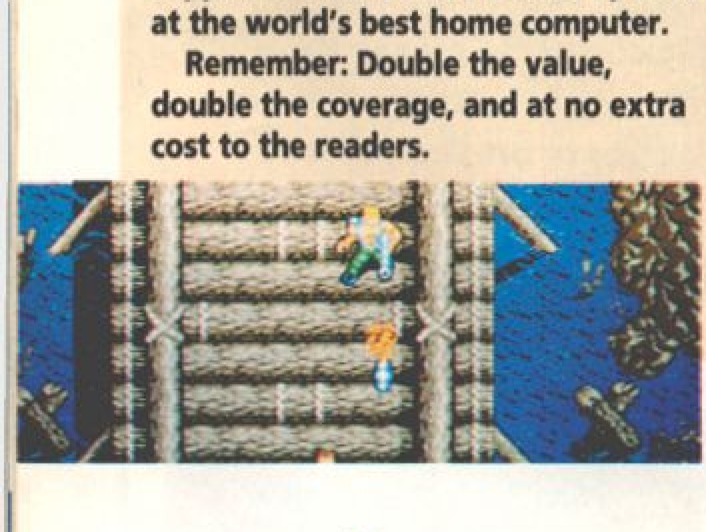
That's right. At no extra cost, the June issue of CU AMIGA will boast not one but TWO action-packed disks of white-hot AMIGA entertainment. Unlike other Amiga magazines, who put up their prices whenever they include an extra disk, there WILL BE NO PRICE INCREASE WHATSOEVER. Two disks for only £2.95!

But that's not all. Our June issue will be every games player's dream. Weighing in at a massive 180-pages, the mag will be packed with all the usual top-quality news, in-depth previews, exclusive reviews and as many hints and tips as we can cram in.

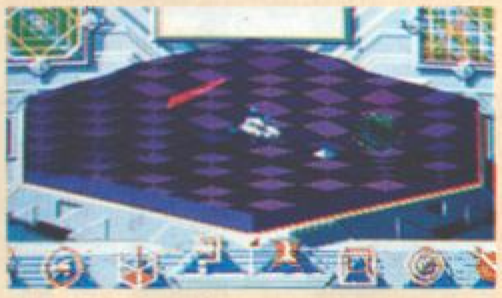
FREE FULL AMIGA GAME
THE MIIRRORSOFT BLOCKBUSTER GRAVITY

We'll also be ADDING to the magazine by bringing you a whole wealth of entertaining articles that tell you exactly how to get the very best from your computer. And that's not even counting a special 24-page supplement that takes a close up look at the world's best home computer.

Remember: Double the value, double the coverage, and at no extra cost to the readers.



PARTY TIME To help celebrate the changes happening to CU we've lined up a double disk of the best in Amiga entertainment, utilities and programs. For starters we've got A WHOLE GAME. Not just any game, mind you. Those lovely people at Mirrorsoft have given us GRAVITY, a smash hit and one of the best sci-fi arcade strategy games ever. Believe us, you ain't seen nothing yet! What's more we've also lined up a playable level of Core's brand new Ikari Warriors-type blaster, Warzone – a game that'll literally blow you away. On top of all that, we've also got lots of brill utilities that'll let you get the most out of your Amiga. Learn how to program, create graphics and sample sounds – we'll help you unleash the power in your Amiga!!



Still in a party mood, we've also commissioned a 24-page supplement which'll tell you all you need to know about the Amiga. Each page will be crammed with useful information, tips and a run down on which software programs get the CU seal of approval.

WHAT'S NEW? We aim to be the Ultimate Guide to the Ultimate Computer. We're also going to make computing fun. Each month we'll be taking a look at all the new hardware and software packages in an authoritative and comprehensive manner. We'll guide you through each package, tell you how to use it in easy-to-follow guides, in a manner which will be ideal for the beginner and satisfying for the enthusiast.

AND DON'T FORGET!
UNLIKE OTHER MAGAZINES WHICH PUT UP THEIR PRICES WHEN THEY INCLUDE AN EXTRA DISK, CU WILL STILL BE ONLY £2.95.

AMOS

AMOS has quickly established itself as the top programming language for the Amiga. We'll be showing you how to get the most out of AMOS and keeping you informed of all new developments and updates. Look out for a special feature on AMOS 3D, soon to be whizzing its way into the softshops.

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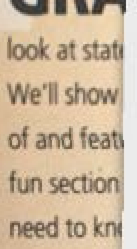

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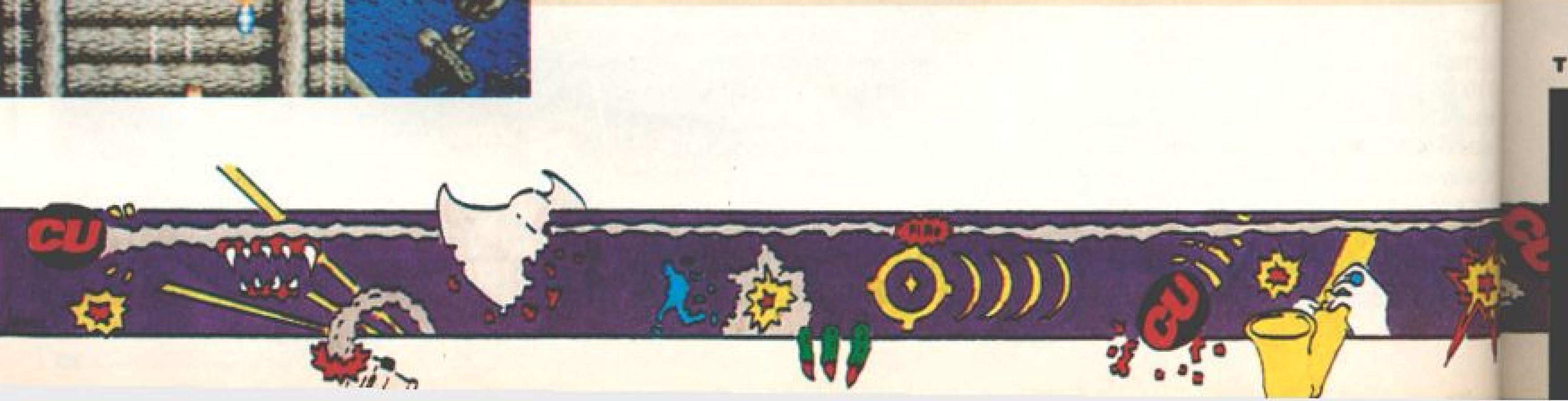

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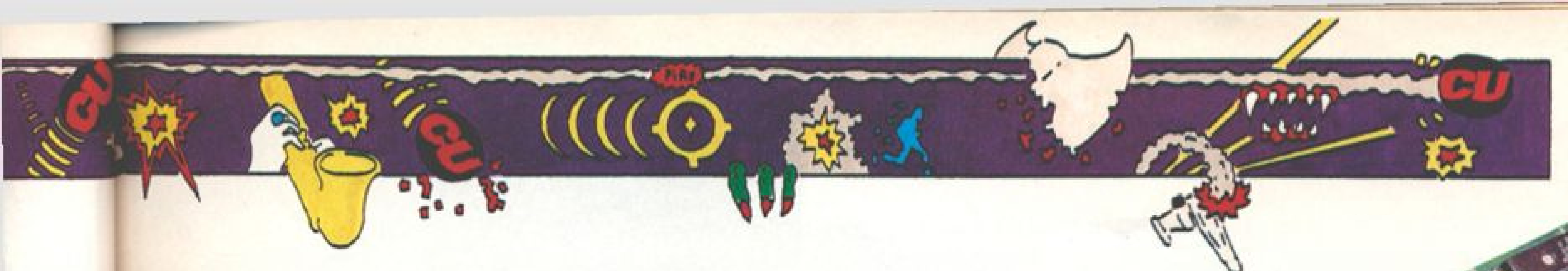

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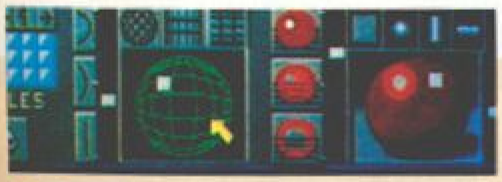


Q&A Got a problem? Then send your queries into our new Technical Editor who's a dab hand at solving anything from printer problems and virus infections to advice on the best memory expansions or DTP packages.

GRAPHICS We'll be taking a look at state-of-the-art graphics on the Amiga. We'll show you exactly what your machine is capable of and feature the work of top graphic artists in a fun section which will tell you everything you need to know.

SOUND Fancy adding a backing track to the game you've created on AMOS? Or sampling bits of music from top albums or CDs? We'll tell you how it's done.

PD We've already got the best PD section in any mag, but it's just got better. From our next issue we'll also be covering all the best PD utilities – some of which are better than full-price software!

HARDWARE

From memory expansions to colour printers, each month CU will tell you which are the best buys and show you how they work. We'll be sorting out the good from the dross. All of our reviews will make comparisons to similarly priced items, and we'll tell you exactly how useful they are.

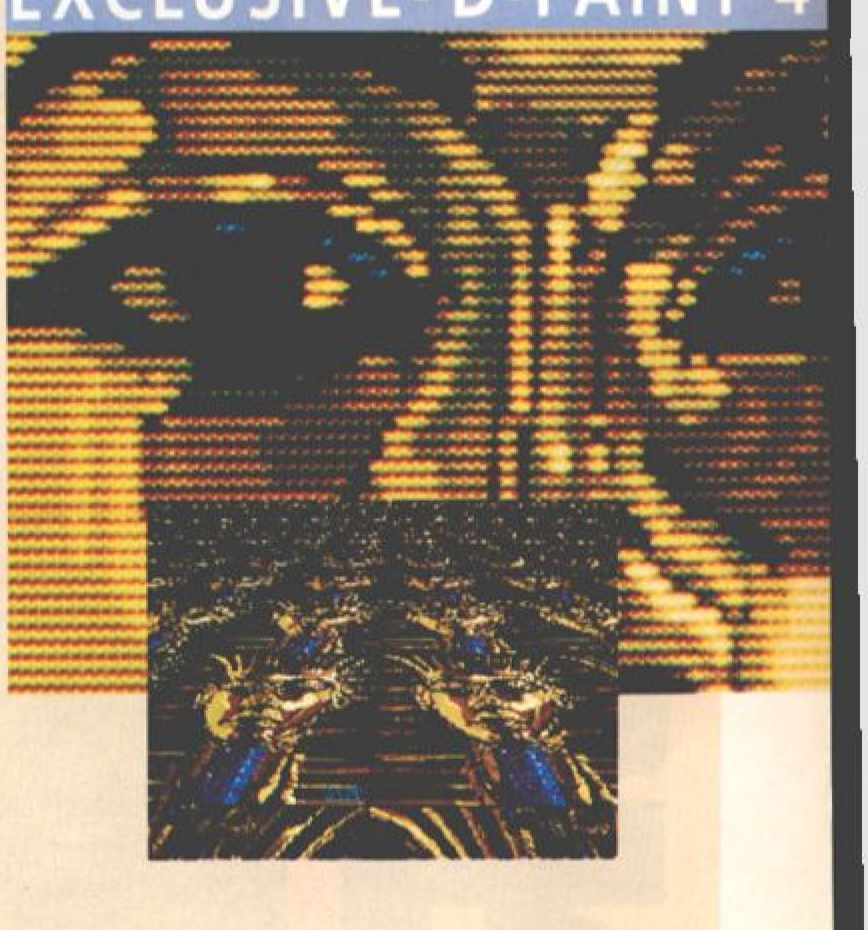
CDTV Set to revolutionise the home computer, Commodore's CDTV will take Amiga owners into the forefront of the computer revolution. Each month we'll show you the latest games, the best software, and keep you up-to-date on just when you can get your hands on the CDTV expansion pack.

EDUCATION

The boom in education software has thrown up an increasing number of education programs. Our new review section will cover all the new releases.

CU Amiga scoops the world with an exclusive in-depth look at Electronic Art's amazing new graphics package – DELUXE PAINT 4.
Stand by to be amazed.

EXCLUSIVE- D-PAINT 4



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MICRO waves

Computer graphics are blurring the line between reality and artifice. ACE visits the Imagina festival and looks at the state of the Art

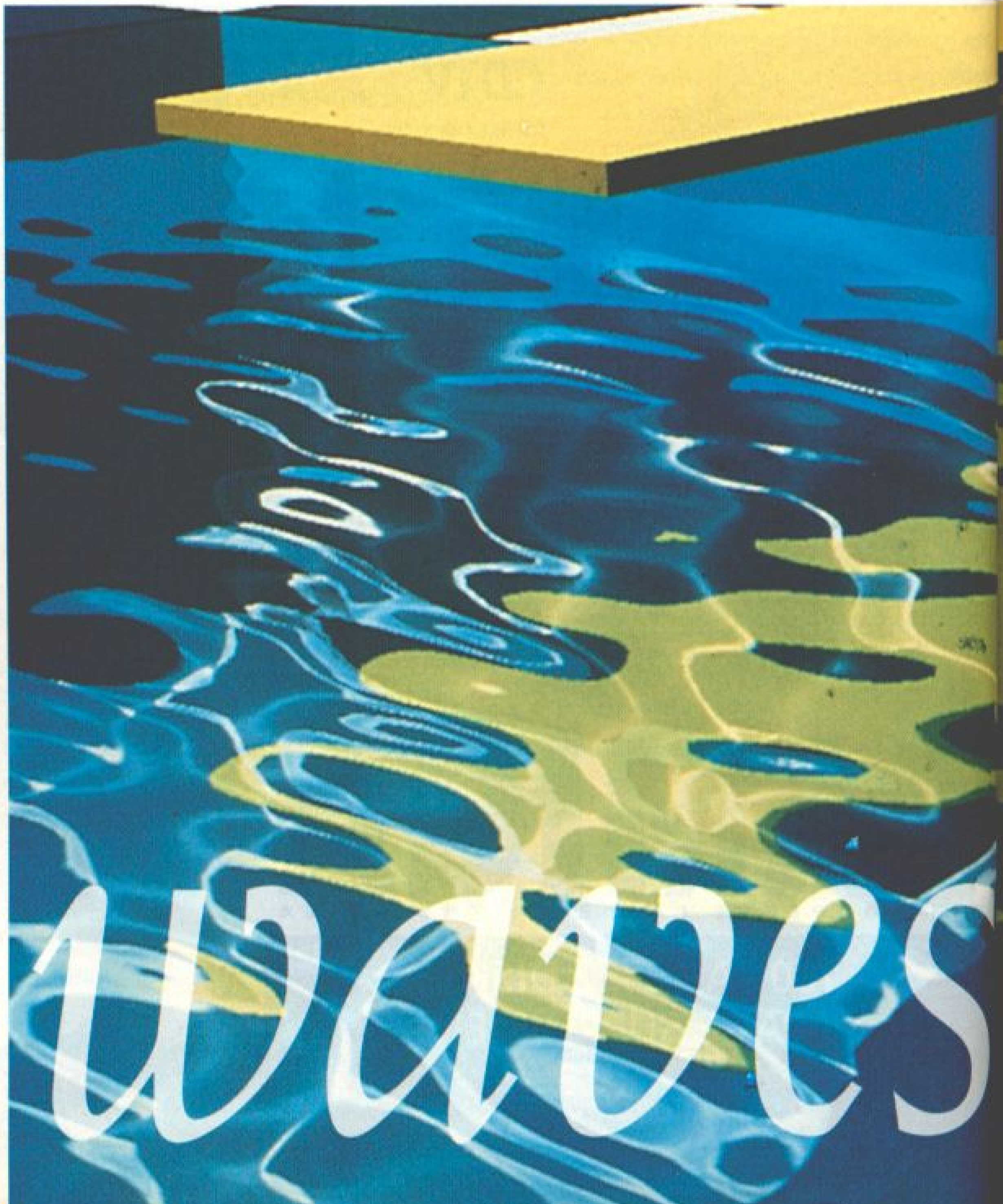
From humble beginnings exactly one decade ago, the Imagina computer graphics festival has blossomed from a sideshow to the Monte Carlo film and TV conference into an internationally renowned event, bringing together professionals from every area of computer graphics.

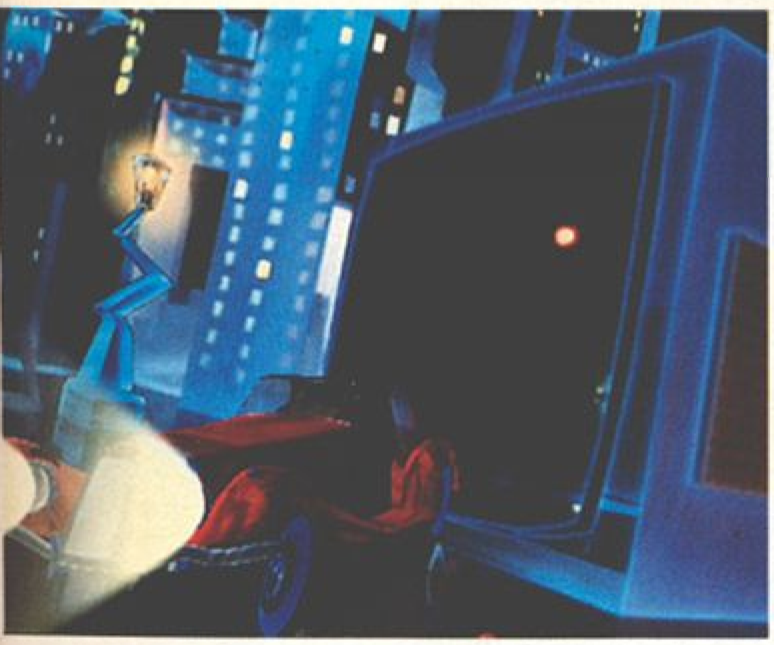
Everyone who is anyone in computer graphics meets there to exchange ideas, present lectures and seminars on the latest ground-breaking techniques, and to dazzle each other with images and films, the like of which most people have never seen, or are capable of conceiving! In short, it is the place to be for anyone even remotely interested in the art of computers.

When people hear the phrase 'computer graphics', most immediately think of video games, or movie special effects. They are covered in detail at Imagina, but just as fascinating is the side that the public never see - the cutting-edge work of research and development teams.

Until recently, computer generated images would often be instantly recognisable as machine-made - stark, solid cubes or pyramids, crudely stuck together and moving in rigid, 'artificial' ways. This is no longer the case.

Now it is possible to create objects which are as smooth as you want them to be, under lighting as gentle as required, and animate them with the grace and atmosphere of the most carefully choreographed dance. The phenomenal processing power available to research establishments or large companies banishes artificiality, allowing today's computer artists a freedom of expression and a range of creative possibilities that have never existed before.

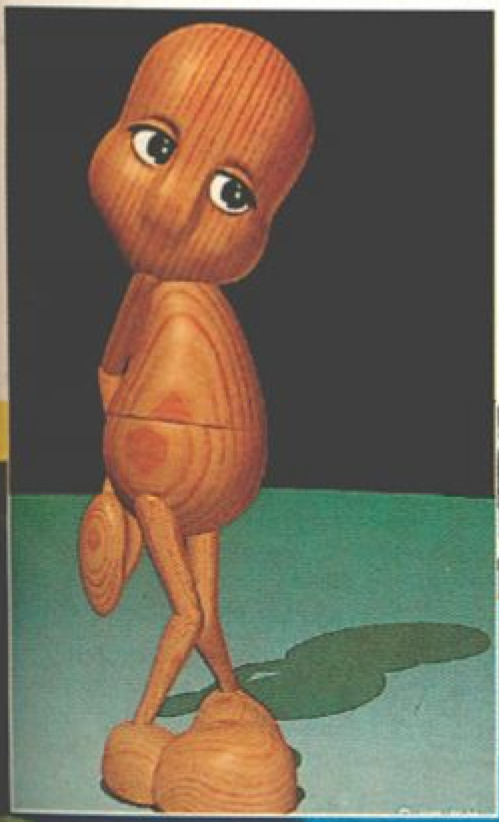




(Far left)
'Illusion', 2nd Prize winner in the Schools and Universities category of the Pixel INA awards. Impressive texturing and reflection effects and bizarre reality twists combine.

(Middle left)
'Sacree Soiree', 3rd Prize winner in the TV credits category. Disparate images melded into a visually stunning abstract collage.

(Left)
A surreal city in microcosm. Dreams of the mind can easily be turned into images on the screen.



Isn't he adorable?
'The Puppet' won 3rd Prize in the 3D Animation category.

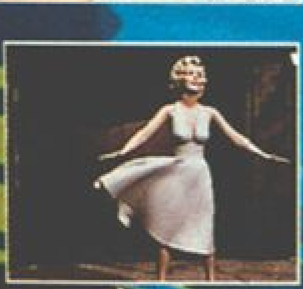
MAKING A SPLASH

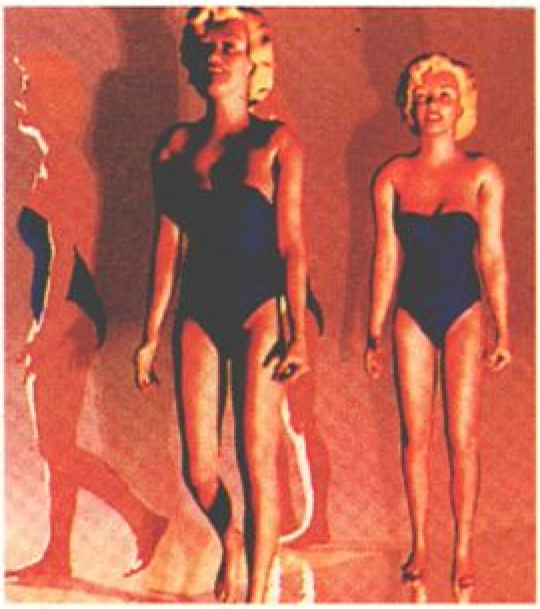
Amongst the most impressive of this year's works was a film entitled 'Splash Dance' from the Apple research team, and some readers might have seen an extract from it on BBC 1's *Tomorrow's World*. It was only a minute long, but it represented the fruits of a year's study into the behaviour of water, and contained sequences of breathtaking realism. The water flowed, rippled and splashed into a simulated valley, cascading over bumps and forming pools in the hollows. The water's surface glittered with reflected light, and it was difficult to believe that this was an artificial simulation.

That particular film won the research category of the prestigious Pixel INA awards, a ceremony held at the end of the festival (see 'The Gold Envelope Please...' box). These highly-coveted trophies were awarded in ten categories according to the audience's votes and were presented by Prince Albert of Monaco.

Another watery film from Britain's Mark Watt demonstrated a different property of this substance that holds much fascination for simulation scientists. His research into 'water caustics' is pioneering, and helped produce his short animation of a swimming pool and the rippling areas of intense light below the surface.

● Mathew Tizard





The tragic deaths of famous actors or actresses may no longer mean the end of their film careers. These 'synthetic actors', modelled on computer, can replace the real thing. Spooky thought, eh?

SKYLAN
ENTRANCE

(Far left)
'Don Quichotte', 3rd Prize winner in the Fiction category. A far more impressive retelling of the classic tale than Nik Kershaw's mid-90s 'pop hit'. Not 'alf!

(Left)
'The Fun-tastic World of Hanna-Barbera', 1st Prize winner in the Special Effects category. It's no wonder that clown's laughing.

MICROwaves

THE GOLD ENVELOPE PLEASE...

Here are the winners and runners-up in the Pixel INA awards. One can only hope that the films will be shown on T.V. at some point and exposed to a wider audience: they have to be seen to be believed.

RESEARCH

1st Prize and Grand Prix

'Splash Dance'
Apple Computers, USA.

A stunning piece showing the latest in realistic simulation of water as it flows over rough and absorbant surfaces.

2nd Prize

'A Passing Shower'
Electric Machinery Lab, Japan.

The fourth in an on-going series of films by this team, exploring the convincing rendering of street scenes. It is set at night and contains some incredible shots of cars and their headlamps reflecting off a wet road surface after a storm.

3rd Prize

'The Portrait of Mr Metakos'
Meta Corp, Japan.

An amusing look at the human body - particularly that of the groups' professor! More seriously, the film deals with the problems associated with representing somebody recognisably in 3D data form. It contains an unnerving sequence which is effectively a solid version of the cover of Queen's 'The Miracle' album - five heads joined together and spinning.

TELEVISION CREDITS

1st Prize

'Chronicle'
BBC TV Graphic Design, Great Britain.

The remarkable opening sequence to this history programme.

2nd Prize

'ABC's World of Discovery'
Metrolight Studios, USA.

3rd Prize

'Sacree Soiree'
Riff, France.

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

1st Prize

'The Poetry of Ernst Jandl'
Eku Wand, Finland.

This film was produced on an Amiga 3000, which just goes to show that budding computer artists without access to a mainframe need not be disheartened. It simply shows a collection of mouths which take turns to read extracts from Jandl's distictive 'sound-poetry'. An extremely disturbing experience.

2nd Prize

'Illusion', Achim Stosser, Finland.

A surreal dinner party, where nothing retains its expected physical properties for very long: the table liquefies and the laws of perspective are flagrantly disobeyed.

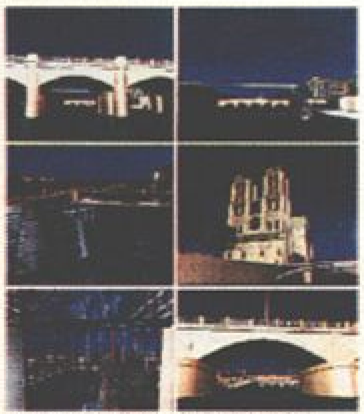
3rd Prize

'Romeo and Josette'
ADIS Centre de Formation, France.

A light-hearted reworking of Shakespeare's balcony scene.

'In Search of Muscular Axis', 2nd Prize in the 3D Animation Category.

(Top) 'Tacauto', 2nd Prize winner in the Art category.
(Above) 'Panspermia', 1st Prize in the 3D Animation category.



'A Trip on the Seine', 3rd Prize in the Visualisation category.

ART

1st Prize

'Eggy'
Yoichiro Kawaguchi, Japan.

A strange and haunting vision of biological organisms as they might exist elsewhere in the universe.

2nd Prize

'Tacauto'
Michel Bret, France.

A digital carnival, attended by individuals whose bodies refuse to stay in one shape.

3rd Prize

'Memory'
John Halas, Hungary.

A minimalist piece of art, using shape and texture to good effect.

3D ANIMATION

1st Prize

'Panspermia'
Thinking Machines Corp, USA.

A visually sumptuous pan-galactic oddysey. Strange plants eject pods that are capable of travelling interstellar distances before they land, burst, and scatter new worlds with more of the same pulsating flora. (Also featured on Tomorrow's World.)

2nd Prize

'In Search of Muscular Axis'
Polygon Pictures, Japan.

This highly original film shows what appears to be a lump of metal metamorphosing into various different humanoid poses in a quest for a physical ideal. At times wryly humorous.

3rd Prize

"The Puppet"
Relief, France.

Spot-on characterisation of a cute wooden mannequin.

VISUALISATION

1st Prize

'Enter the Elgin'
Alias, Canada.

A synthesised trip round a lavish new Canadian theatre, as yet unbuilt.

2nd Prize

'Alfa Romeo 33'
Ex Machina, France.

Shows the internal and external structure of a new car. It even shows simulations of the airflow of the ventilation system and the distribution of fuel particles in the engine.

3rd Prize

'A Trip on the Seine'
Videosystem, France.

An impressive flight along this famous French river from source to estuary, with all the landmarks along the way. Akin to the *From London to Brighton in 3 Minutes* train journey film.

ADVERTISING

1st Prize

'Heinz Ants'
ILM, USA.

An ingenious mix of live footage of a picnic, and the computerised abduction of a hotdog by ravenous insects.

2nd Prize

'Lyons/Tetley Decaffeinated Tea', Rushes CG, Great Britain.

You've all seen this one - the teapot which is reluctant to be filled with decaffeinated tea. Yes, it WAS compu er generated!

3rd Prize

'Livesavers: The Goodtimes Roll!' Topix, Canada.

The transatlantic equivalent of fruit-polos have a party on a piano.

FICTION

1st Prize

'The Invisible Man in... Blind Love', Eurocitel, France.

A quite incredible achievement. Recaptures the feel of the old 40's gumshoe movies, and stars the Invisible Man as he rifles through an office for clues.

2nd Prize

'Grinning Evil Death'
McKenna & Sabiston, USA.

A dynamically-simulated giant cockroach terrorises a city: only the failed superhero Captain Sarcastic ca save the human race from destructio Mixes conventional 2D cartoon animation with state-of-the-art 3D graphics. A personal favourite.

3rd Prize

'Don Quichotte'
Videosystem, France.

A modern medium used to tell the ce turies-old legend of Don Quixote and his sidekick, Sancho Panza.

2D ANIMATION

1st Prize and European Prize

'Green Movie Movie'
Green Movie, Italy.

A condensed history of art told in graphical form.

2nd Prize

'L'Escamoteur'
Advance Prods, France.

Superior Terry Gilliam-esque manipulation of 'cutouts' from famous paintings.

3rd Prize

'Wet Science'
Xaos Inc, USA.

Fun with fluids.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

1st Prize

'The Funtastic World of Hanna-Barbera'
Rhythm & Hues, USA.

Shown as part of an American simulator ride, the viewer is 'flown' through a computer-generated landscape featuring every Hanna-Barbera character from the Flintstones to Scooby-Doo. The product of two years' work by two different computer graphic houses.

2nd Prize

'The Nature'
Links Corp, Japan.

Computer-animated bees and wasps engage in battle, skillfully superimposed onto a real-life forest.

3rd Prize

'Lemsip'
John Clive, Great Britain.

The singing frog from the TV advert struts his stuff.

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FLAMES OF FREEDOM

Flames of Freedom is available now for your Atari ST and soon for Commodore Amiga

MIDWINTER II
RAINBIRD

MASTERS OF STRATEGY

EAT MY SHORTS

The Simpsons. They're the latest sensation sweeping the nation. You've seen the TV show, bought the T-shirt, now play the coin-op...

THE SIMPSONS

If you're still using Philip Schofield as a role model, get all your work handed in on time and get up on Sunday mornings to wash the car - do not read on. On the other hand, if you have the propensity to wear loud shirts, are not on first name terms with your hairdresser, have a bedroom like a bomb site, enjoy screaming maniacally in public places and generally are about as cool as hell - then we can safely assume that you watch *The Simpsons*.

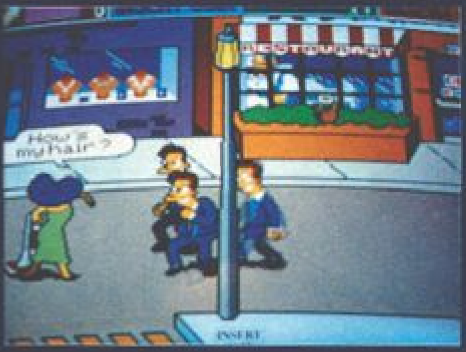
The Simpsons? Yes indeed - the Matt Groening cartoon that has captured the imagination of a whole generation of human beings across the World - and turned them into complete bastards! The cartoon that has had the guts to show family life - and nuclear power - exactly how it is....explosive. And it's incredibly funny to boot. *(No it's not. It's rubbish - Ed)* And, of course, it was only a matter of time before a series that successful turned into a computer game. So here it is, from Konami.

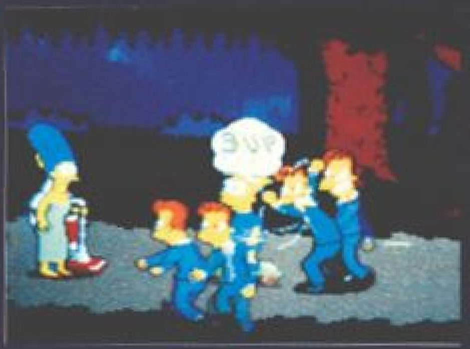
Now, Konami has had a great deal of success with licensed characters recently. Well, four licensed characters to be precise. Four *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, to be right on the money.....as you can imagine. In fact, their four player game using these little sprites as the main characters was a real money spinner.

But these were characters that were heaven sent for coin-ops. Already violent little Cheloniates, making a game around oddly shaped Ninja Warriors took all of five minutes to come up with. But the Simpsons? A fight to the death in the sitting room perhaps, with each of you taking the part of a family member? Or you play the role of Homer in the nuclear plant, and have to juggle the different shapes of radioactive waste material that roll down a conveyor belt, before critical mass is achieved?

So what innovative scenario have Konami come up with to bring out the unique nature of this licensed property? *Ninja Turtles II*, with Simpsons sprites, that's what. Yes, it's another four player beat 'em up. Yawn....

I guess that Konami must think that after one success, they may as well stick to the same formula again. After all, how can they go wrong? To me, that's rather like saying, "I've just had ten pints and feel really good - so obviously what I need to feel even better, is another ten!"





The Simpsons. Never let a bit of innovation get in the way of a sale.

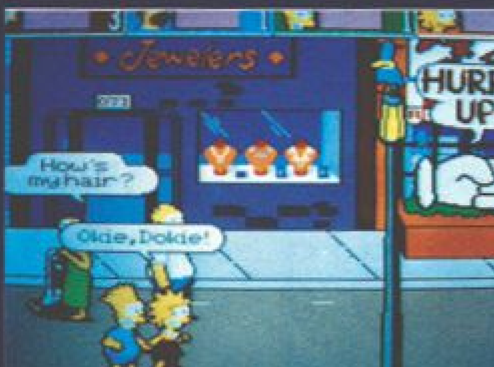
Still, given that they've used this tired horizontal scrolling beat-em up format, luckily for them, given the stylised nature of the Groening graphics, good sampled sound and a little bit of imagination in the use of the characters, *The Simpsons* coin-op isn't a complete disaster.

At the start of the game, you can choose which member of the family you would like to play. Of course, everyone prefers to be Bart...but only one of you can take that hallowed role. If you're playing multi-player and someone's already thwacking the nasties with his skateboard, then you'll have to settle for either Lisa - who raises hell with a skipping rope, Homer who can strike out with his trusty bowling ball or Marge....who cops the villains around the head with a vacuum cleaner. It may not sound like stitch-splitting hilarity, but it's actually quite funny.

The story goes that the whole family is shopping in Springfield when they witness a jewel heist - trouble is, the robbers trip over the family when coming out of the shop, the priceless gem rises into the sky in a faultless arc...and is swallowed by Baby Simpson.

Bad guys forthwith make off with her and the family follows in pursuit. From there on in, it's waves of mean looking guys in the mall, waves of mean looking guys in the fairground and so on, which you, the family, have to lay into. Extra energy, depleted by enemy attacks, can be made up by eating randomly appearing Hamburgers, Pie, Hotdogs, etc, etc.

Gameplay-wise, it's boring - although I encourage you to play it once or twice, as a hint of the true surreal nature of the Simpsons bursts through from time to time. But the real lesson from this is to beware major licensed deals. The big money that the companies have to put up in order to get the rights to use theses characters means that on-one is going to take risks making something out of the ordinary. Even if it means betraying the spirit of the original property. *The Simpsons* will not be as successful as the *Turtles*.


Jewelers
HURRY UP
How's my hair?
Okie, Dokie!

Chrome-dome Homer continually inspects his pate, (above), while the family look to him for guidance. Right.

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*(Left: Top ,Middle and Bottom)*They may not look like much static, but when you experience the holographic coin-ops' capabilities first-hand, you will be impressed.

HOLOGRAMS IN THE ARCADES

The last few months have been good for the coin-op industry. Sega's *R360* was a great leap forward in technology - and then W Industries Virtual Reality coin-op emerged, full of great promise. Now Sega are fighting back again, with a game where you play with animated Holograms. And the first game using this technology, *Hologram Time Traveller*, will be out in the arcades in, they say, July.

Licenced exclusivelty by Sega from an original US company, *Time Traveller* uses set live footage of real actors and action film in a Hollywood studio and captured on Laserdisc. This is displayed on a monitor as per usual - but then, projected onto the playing plinth of the unit, using a special lens....which means you see the game as real 3-D little people, running around, directed by you!

The nature of the gameplay is similar to that of, say, *Dragon's Lair* - there you had set sequences of cartoon animation, with small windows of interaction between the player and the game setting off another sequence, depending on the particular choice made.

The difference here is that all the action is in true 3D - and it's real people rather than a drawn cartoon. Fab or what? With the additional draw of excellent CD quality sound, it's no wonder that Sega Europe's boss Vic Leslie is so excited by the immanent launch.

More good news - while the recent technological wonders in the arcades have been fairly pricey for the operator to buy.....almost £70,000 for the *R360*....the hologram unit is low priced enough that even the smallest arcades can afford it - and not charge the earth to you, the punter!

Although the semi-interactive nature of the gameplay will limit the types of game availible on this new unit - there's no doubt that we'll be seeing a lot of these in the arcade later this summer. For more information, investigate the News pages this month.

Street Fighter II - Capcom

Beat-em ups are always popular - and now Capcom has produced one with more fire buttons than a squadron full of alien TIE fighters. Complex, masses of animations and not a little wit - probably most of it wasted - *Street Fighter II* almost transceds its genre.

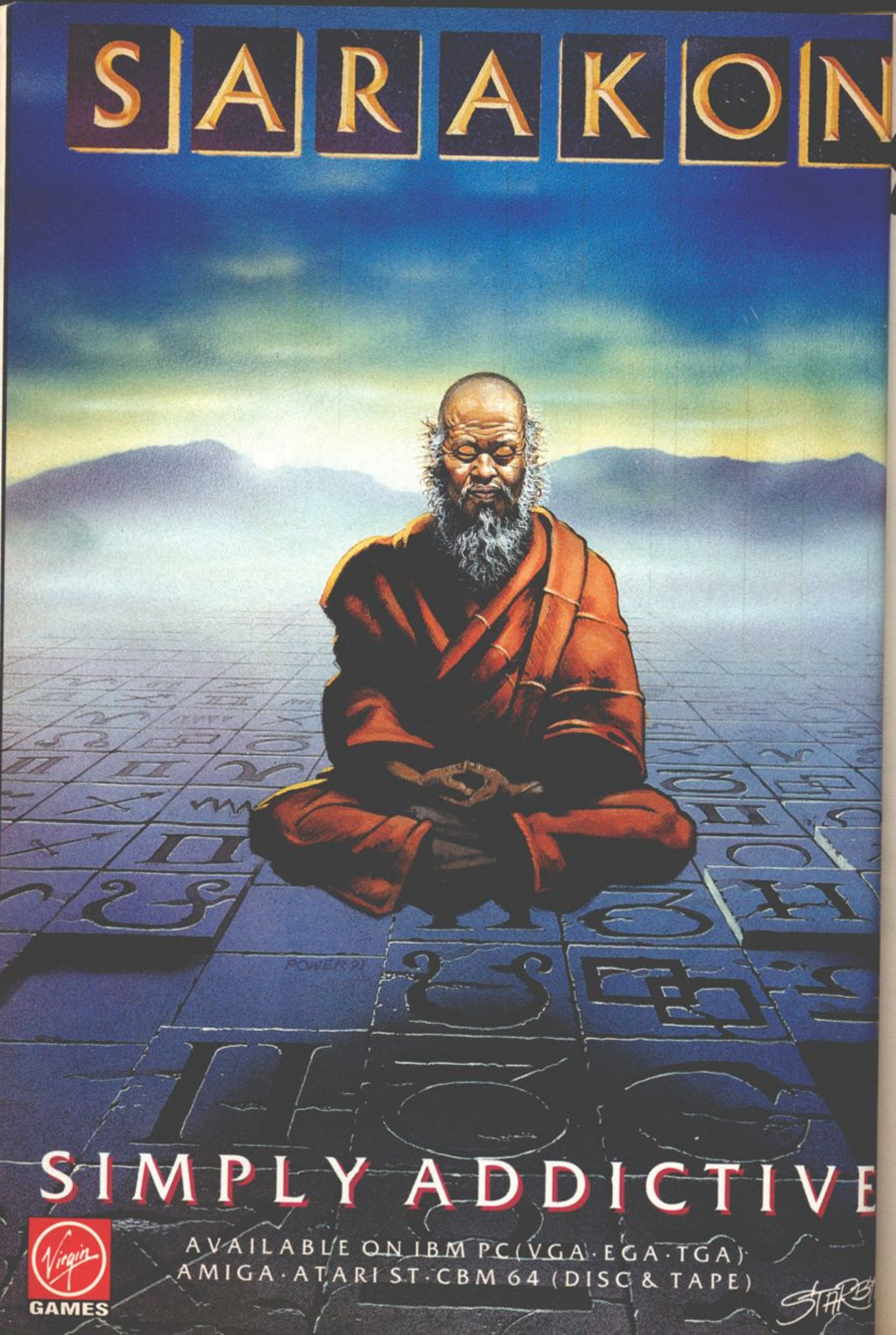
Strike Force - Midway

How could they do this to me? *Defender II* appears almost ten years after the original classic.....and it's a load of old tosh. Wildly depressing for the aging hippie fans of way back - maybe those who never saw it may find something in this break-dancing, hip-hop, get down version.

Cotton - Sega

(*Below*): It's nice to know that even the biggest companies can go loopy from time to time. Think of *Cotton* as *Nemesis*, but using a cute heroine witch instead of a spaceship, and fairies instead of power-ups. Nurse, the screens.....

Fairies instead of power-ups? What is the world coming to? Still, it makes a nice change from all those glowing pods.


SARAKON
POWER 91
SIMPLY ADDICTIVE
Virgin GAMES
AVAILABLE ON IBM PC (VGA·EGA·TGA)
AMIGA·ATARI ST·CBM 64 (DISC & TAPE)

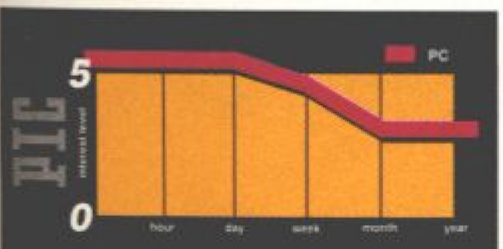
SCREEN TEST

Heart of China, promised by Sierra to be the most impressive game on the PC this year. Page 50

Warzone. Can Core repeat their recent success with this wholehearted shoot-out?

IT TAKES ALL SORTS

And that fact is rarely more evident than when discussing games. One man's meat is more often than not another's poison. And when hyperbole and superlatives fill the air like so many noxious human emissions, it's easy to become desensitized to the real feel of the review. Here at ACE, we try to be a little more conservative in our approach. You won't find wasted words here. ACE reviews aim to be level headed and analytical. But that doesn't mean we don't get excited about the games we see. We simply make sure we get excited about the right ones.



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve* – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

- **Lots of cutesy characters**
- **Fascinating 3D sections.**
- **The two player link-up option for stage 16**

- **Twelve disks to swap!**
- **No colour on some stages**
- **No joystick or mouse control option**

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.

Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.

Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE UP

Computer and Console ***pages 50-83***

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54 **JETFIGHTER 2** *US Gold*
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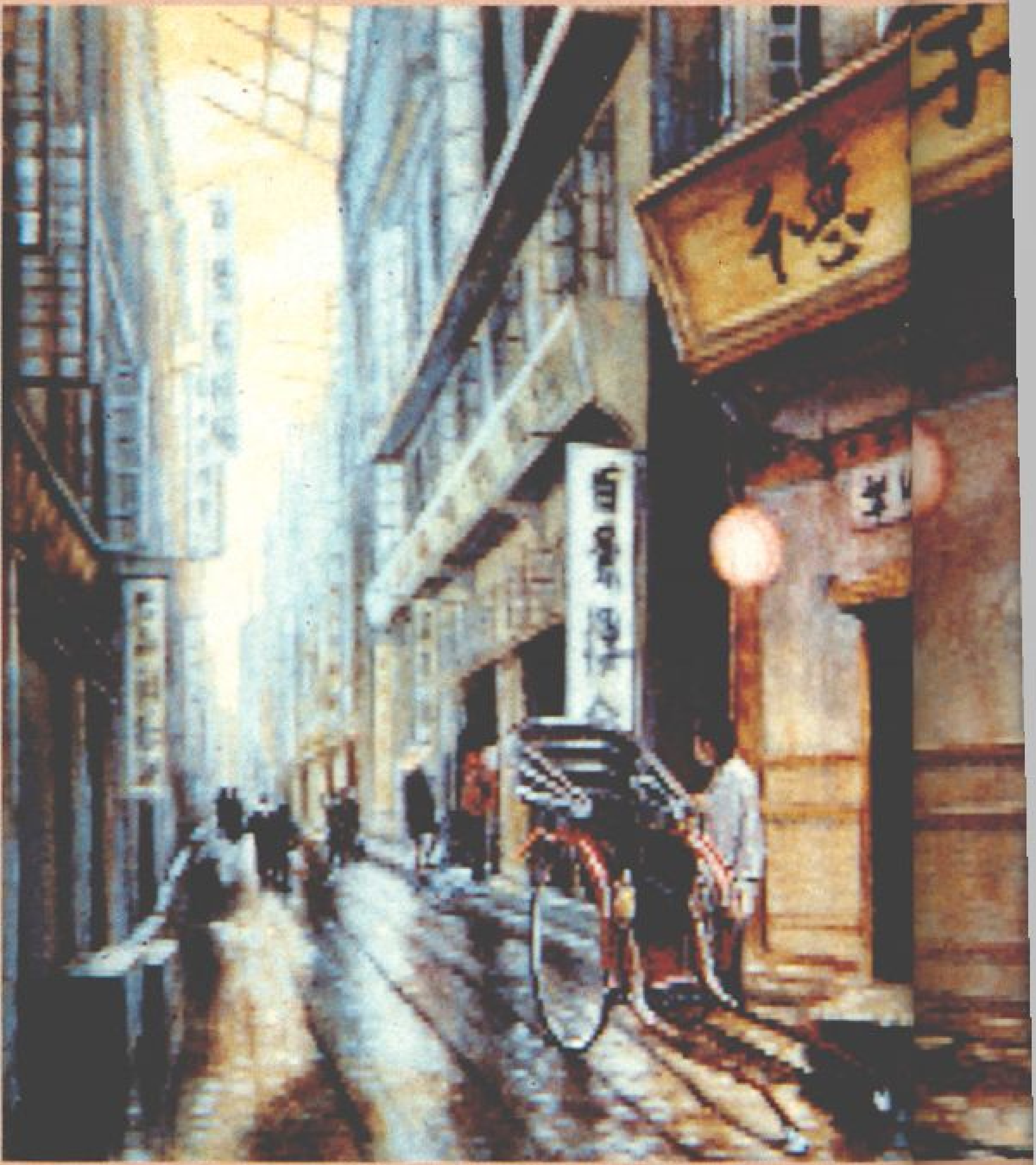
Plus many more that won't even fit on the list!

HEART OF CHINA

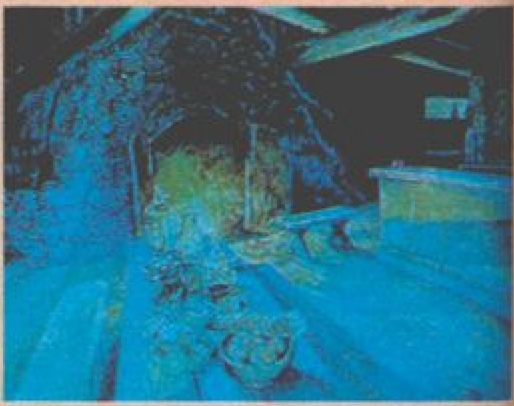


Computerised movies come a step closer thanks to DYNAMIX

Despite what you might think, there is currently only one software company making the so-called 'interactive movies'. When you think about it, *King's Quest V* and *Space Quest IV et al* are just advanced adventure games with fancy graphics and flash sound.

The closest anyone has come to creating a film on a computer was Dynamix, several years ago, with *David Wolf: Secret Agent*. Even that, however, was just five sub-games separated by some lengthy digitised scenes. What it did do though was offer a glimpse into the future of gaming technology and with *Heart Of China*, it looks very much as though that future has finally arrived and once again, Dynamix's name is at the front. Fortunately for Sierra, it also happens to be one of its affiliated labels.

Set in the late 1920s, the golden time of high adventure, *Heart Of China* puts you in the shoes of 'Lucky' Jake Masters, a down on his luck pilot that's become a little too friendly with the bottle.



Short of work (and money) you accept the task of finding society gal Kate Lomax, the kidnaped daughter of a wealthy American businessman. Unfortunately, the last time anyone saw her, she was being carried off in the direction of revolutionary China. Nothing for it than to fire up your engines and get your plane in the air.

Anyone who has seen Tom Selleck's film High Road To China is by now shouting 'seen it before'. Well, yes the plot, settings and characters are all very similar, but gamewise this is more like an early Indiana Jones adventure than anything else. Anyway, when was the last time you saw a truly original plot in a computer game?

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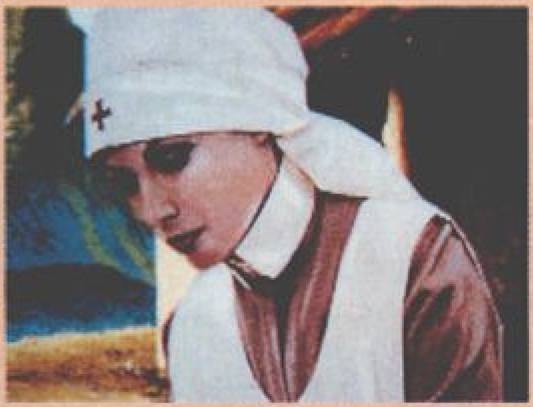
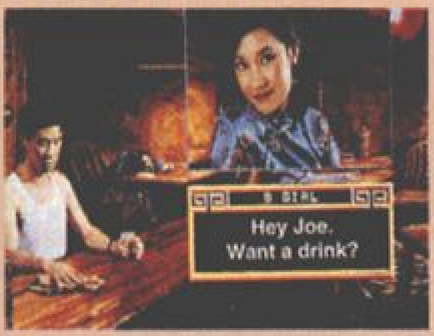


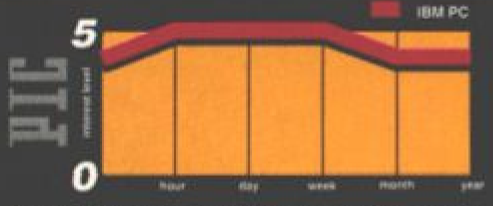
Will you just *look* at those graphics? Every one has been hand digitised or hand painted from images of *real* actors. And doesn't it show. All the locations are full of atmosphere and the characters have genuine, well, character. Impressed? You should be.

AND WHY NOT

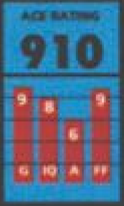
The use of over 80 actors and actresses coupled with the professional back-stage crew (cameramen, sound technicians, make-up artists, costumers etc.) make Heart Of China one of the closest things to a real interactive movie yet seen. This raises the question, how long before magazine reviews become like Barry Norman and Film 91, with reviewers criticising the quality of the characters and the acting instead of the gameplay? Also, will we be seeing more famous actors playing the parts? Wouldn't it be nice if the next Indiana Jones adventure had a digitised Harrison Ford running around? Sierra itself doesn't think that that day is too far away and with their kind of track record to go on, who knows?



Hey Joe.
Want a drink?



One of the few true replayable adventures. In the same sense that you'd buy a video so that you can watch a good film over and over again, Heart Of China has plenty of variety to make you want to play it again and again.

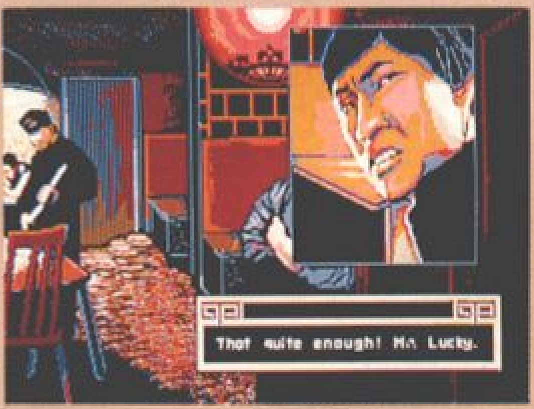


IBM PC

The bigger the better. Heart Of China will make full use of whatever your PC can offer it. Give it a Roland and you'll get incredible music. Add an AdLib or Soundblaster to that and you'll get digitised speech as well! Graphically it's better than anything you're likely to have seen before, mainly due to the excellent digitisation.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£40.85	OUT NOW



That quite enough! Mr. Lucky.

It's rare that an action movie will concentrate solely on one character and this is where *Heart Of China* just adds to it's film-like quality. While searching for the elusive Kate, you'll enlist the help of Zhao Chi, a shadowy ninja that inevitably ends up acting like a typical sidekick. The nice thing about this is that at any time you can switch characters and control either Jake or Chi and once you've rescued Kate and are trying to get back home, you have the option to switch through all three. This allows for a much greater feeling of interactivity and is often essential for solving some of the puzzles.

The other element that makes this feel more like a movie than a standard adventure, is the very non-linear feel to things. No matter what boxes and press blurbs tell you, almost every adventure has only one correct path to it (simply being able to take two or three different routes to the same building does not really count as multiple solutions).

Of course, every game has to have some sort of linear plot running through it, but the difference *Heart Of China* has to other games is that most of the puzzles have more than one way of being solved, more often than not using different characters. I won't spoil your enjoyment by giving examples, but there are at least four different endings that can be played, each depending on how you dealt with earlier events.

As is almost Dynamix' wont, the graphic and sonic quality of *Heart Of China* overtake everything else before it. This seems to happen every time a new game is released and, of course, is good news for the punter. The digitised graphics work extremely well and excellently blend with the background artwork, to the point that you'd think they weren't two separate entities.

Unfortunately (and *Space Quest IV* is a culprit here), these aesthetic delights often have the effect of making the actual game very short. No such worries here, *Heart Of China* has plenty to keep it going. The arcade sections come as a welcome break and are good enough to present a challenge. Adventure purists will now turn away in disgust saying 'why include arcade games?'. What they do is add to the film atmosphere that has been constantly generated throughout.

When you watch a film that contains, let's say, a shoot-out, the tension in the audience goes up because you know that at any point one of our heroes could be shot. When you play the computer game license and you reach the shoot-out scene, which would be more entertaining? Typing (or in this case clicking) the command 'Kill Bad Guys', or actually taking hold of the gun and shooting it out. Rather than type' Drive Tank Down Mountain' wouldn't you want to take the

☞

HEART OF CHINA

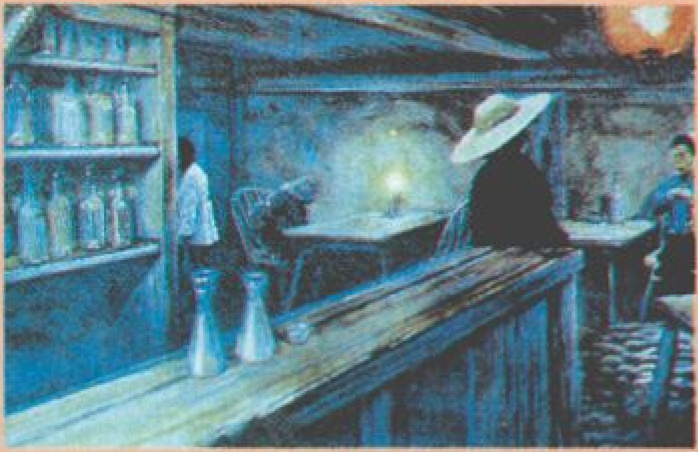
☞ controls and drive it yourself? Simply put, to capture the feel of an action film, you need to have action in the game.

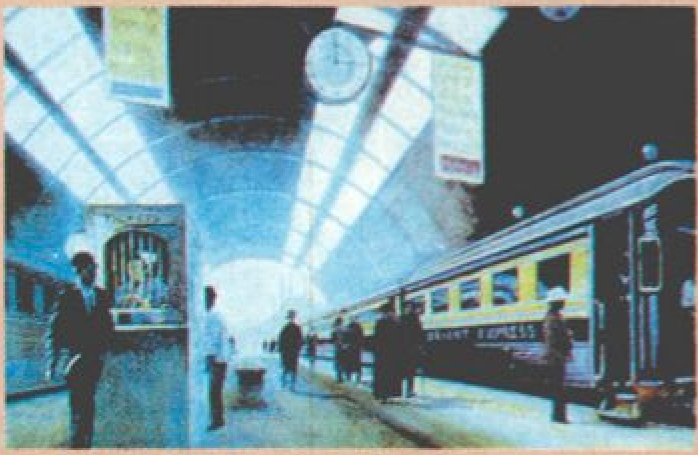
The various arcade sections include the aforementioned Tank battle (using Dynamix's innovative 3Space, seen in *Red Baron* and *A10 Tank Killer*), a camel chase and a fight on top of a moving train (yes, I know it's corny but everybody else does it). They're all a little tricky to complete but thankfully you get the option to skip past them if you fail too often. Of course, whether you want to take this easy way out is your choice.

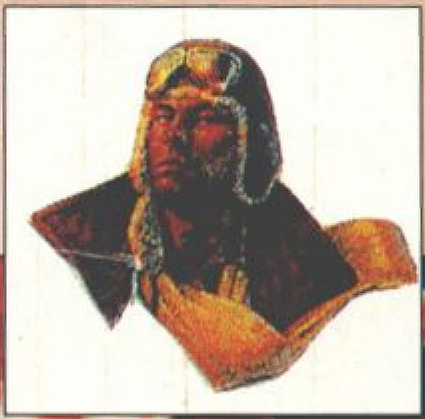
Ultimately it's going to be the price that harms *Heart Of China* most, which is a shame as it is one of those games that has to be played to be believed. Until the high production costs can be overcome, or the public starts to take more notice of the games and the companies start making as much money from them as from a film, the price is going to stay high.

Of course, with CD-ROM starting to make genuine ripples in the computer industry, Sierra are taking the idea very seriously and it won't be long before Jake Masters is adventuring with real speech to go with the graphics. When that happens the 'interactive movie' will have truly arrived and interest should soar. As it stands, we are currently in the silent movie era, but growing fast.

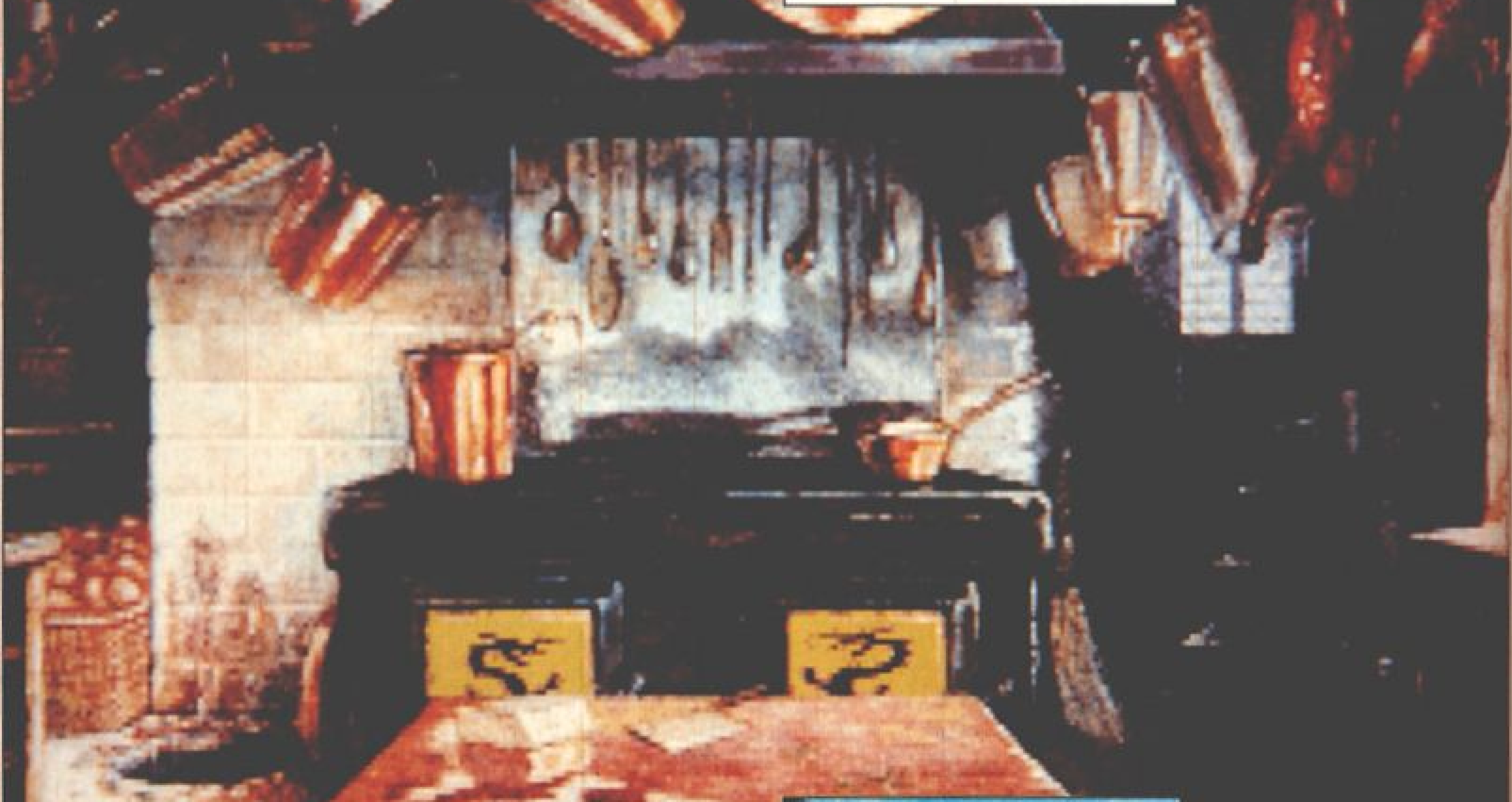
● **Paul Presley**







'Lucky' by name and lucky by nature, Jake Masters is everything a typical American hero should be, right down to the unruffable hair.

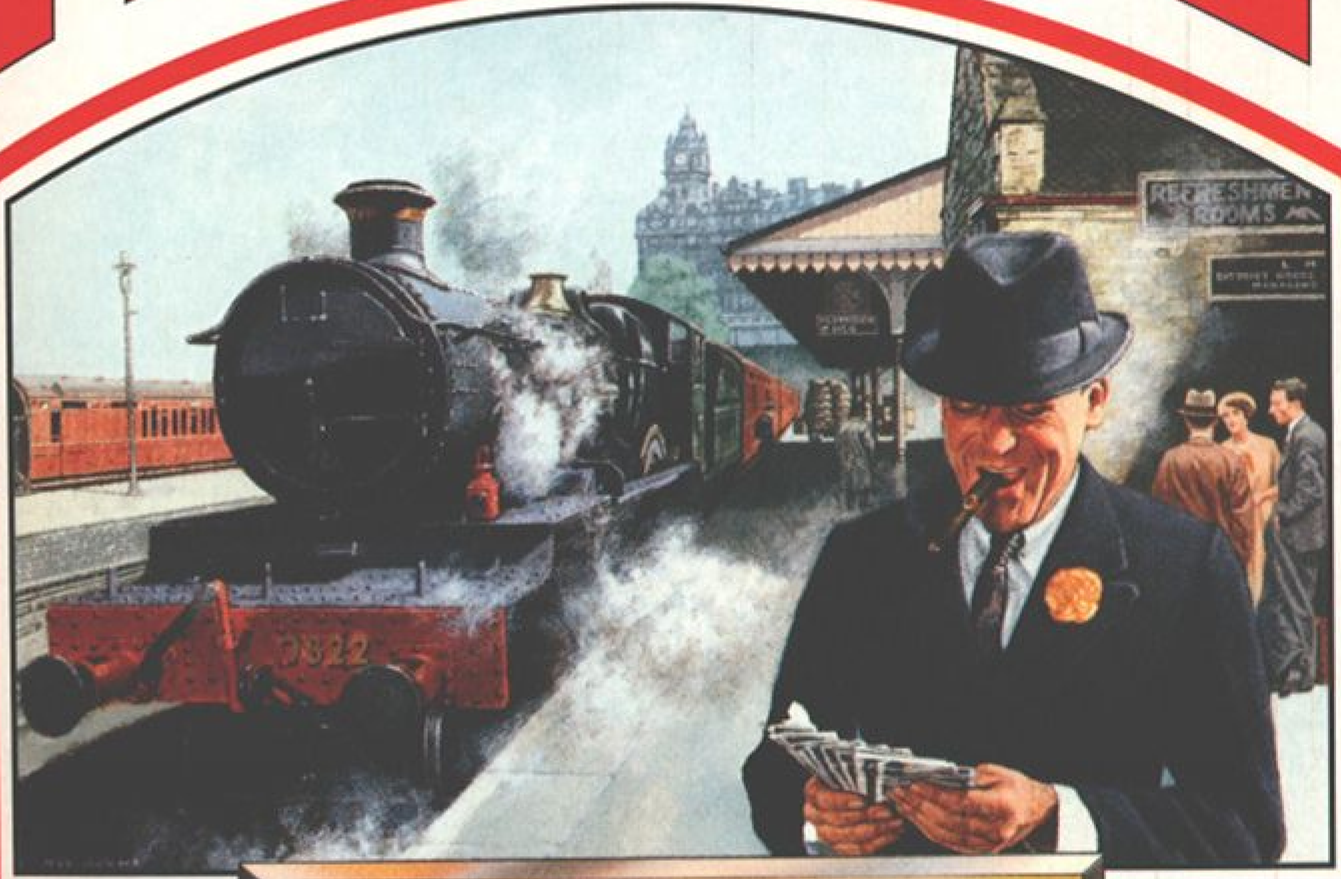


Heart of China **is a significant breakthrough in the interactive storytelling genre. Distinct from previous titles like *Rise of the Dragon* and *Space Quest IV*, it is both a massive tale packed with digitised his and fantastic sound effects, but also contains a truly narrative storyline, which leads the player through the adventure-world, leaving them floundering in few (if any) situations. There are lessons for us all in the meticulous storyboarding and research which Dynamix put into their games.**

Sid Meier's

RAILROAD

TYCOON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JETFIGH

ADVANCED TACT

RESCUE

Help liberate America with VELOCITY/US GOLD's flight sim

A warning to any die-hard US patriots: before you continue reading, sit down, get a stiff drink, put 'The Star-Spangled Banner' on the stereo, clutch 'Old Glory' to your breast and get ready to wipe away the tears of anguish and outrage, because...

America has been invaded.

Yup, you read it right. Part of the good ol' US of A is under occupation by an enemy army. A group of South American countries, for years engaged in a secret Drug War, have united together under the banner of the Latin American Revolutionary Alliance (LARA) and invaded the West Coast of an America grown complacent and under-defended due to the collapse of Communism.

Full-scale retaliation and the use of nuclear weapons is clearly impossible: civilian casualties would be unacceptably high. Thus the war has become one of attrition, each side constantly gnawing at each other's resources. As pilot of the US's most-advanced fighter, the F-23D 'Black Widow', it's up to you to make America a Land of the Free once more.

THE SAME OLD SONG?

PC flight sims seem to appear more regularly than Peter Ustinov on TV chat shows. Isn't there a risk of everyone getting a bit sick of them? Well, if they're as good as *Jetfighter II*, the answer is definitely no.

The game comes packaged in unique packaging that I suppose is meant to resemble a jet's cockpit. It's very clever and catches the eye (if you're not careful) - the only trouble is that once opened the box is near impossible to close again! Inside are 5.25" and 3.5" floppies and a well-produced manual.

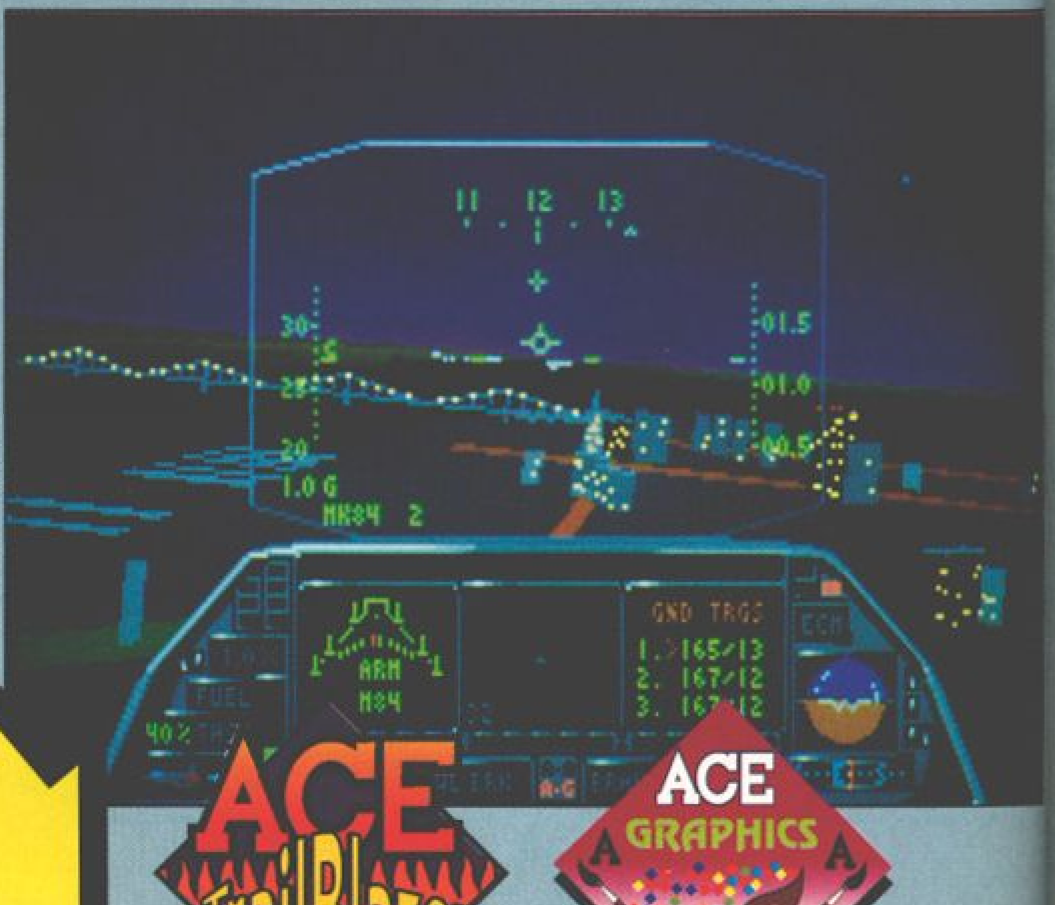
Don't bother with the manual's short-story intro - it's the biggest load of rancid gungho guff I've ever read. But the rest is great, with a well thought-out tutorial that guides you painlessly through free flight to take offs and landings (both visual and instrument guided) to air-to-air and air-to-ground combat.

The most immediately impressing thing about *Jetfighter II* is its superb graphics. It's no surprise that the filled-polygons are fast and highly-detailed - to compete in today's market they've got to be. What really impresses are the extra touches: the realistic object shading which alte according to the direction of the sunlight; the subtle hazing effects on distant objects; the beautifully-rendered dawns and sunsets; the li windows on the buildings at night. The list goes on and on. Who needs reality with graphics as good as these?

The sound on a basic PC is surprisingly good (well, as good as it could ever be). With a soun board the effects are better, but not outstandin In fact, in comparison to the high quality of the visuals the sound is frankly a little disappointin All the booms and bangs you'd expect are there alright, they just seem to lack 'meat'.

8MHz MACHINES NEED NOT APPLY

For maximum enjoyment, Velocity recommend that *Jetfighter II* be run on 80286 PC running at 12 MHz or higher. However, there are options to turn off some of the more processor intensive effects to speed things up. I found that even on an 8MHz snail with all the bells and whistles the game still ran at an acceptably high speed.



The city by night is a beautiful thing to behold. But doesn't spend too much time sight-seeing - here be dragons! (Well, MiGs anyway.)

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CTICAL FIGHTER

In flight, the F-23 is a dream: it's fairly resistant to stalling and can be liberally flipped around without dire consequences. Control is moderately complex - most of the jet's major functions are accounted for, but the accent is more on action than a rigorous simulation of the myriad knob-twiddles and button-pushes required in a real jet.

The core of the game is the Adventure, a series of offensive and defensive missions centred around the occupied San Francisco bay area. The player is given a small selection of missions to choose between flying. By reading the briefings, the player has to decide which will cause the most serious damage to the enemy. Destroying a supply convoy may slow the enemy, but would bombing a main ammo dump cause more long-term harm? You decide.

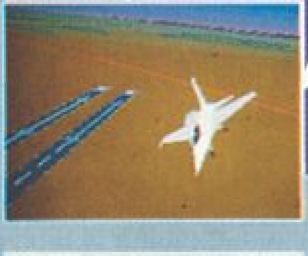
Having completed the chosen mission (successfully or otherwise), you have to mobilise against a reprisal attack (maybe having to splash a stolen F-23 or eliminate two in-coming cruise missiles, for example). Perform well in this brutal game of high-powered Chess and the enemy forces will be pushed back a bit. Do badly and... well, do I have to spell it out? The ultimate aim is to finally drive the enemy into the sea and back to South America. Are you up to the task? More importantly, given the complexity of the graphics, is your PC?

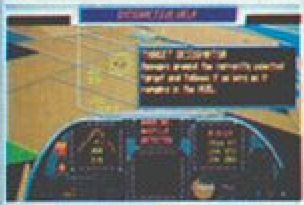
● David Upchurch

(Below)
Looking for prey in your Falcon. The highly-manoeuvrable out-of-cockpit camera can be shifted to view the jet from any angle and at any magnification.

(Bottom)

Newcomers to sims will welcome the interactive help option - simply click on any confusing dials or knobs in the cockpit and up pops a window explaining their function in full. What could be easier?

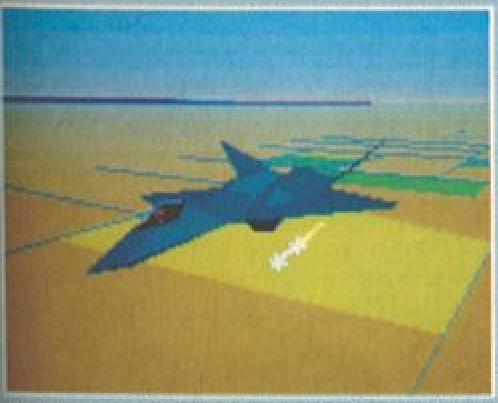




THE BLACK WIDOW

The F-23D 'Black Widow' Advanced Tactical Fighter is, as they say, one mean muvva. The F-14, F-16 and F/A-18 are all fast, agile and pack a deadly punch, but they make enemy radar light up like a Christmas tree. The F-117A, on the other hand, can glide unseen into enemy territory, but is about as easy to handle as an oil tanker on greased ice. The lethal beauty of the F-23D is that it combines the speed and performance of a fighter with the radar invisibility of a stealth bomber without significant compromise.

The F-23D gives even the worst pilot a distinct advantage over the enemy craft (I should know, with my flying 'skills'), but masochists who want to stack the odds against themselves can choose to fly an F-14 'Tomcat', F-16 'Falcon' or F/A-18 'Hornet' instead.

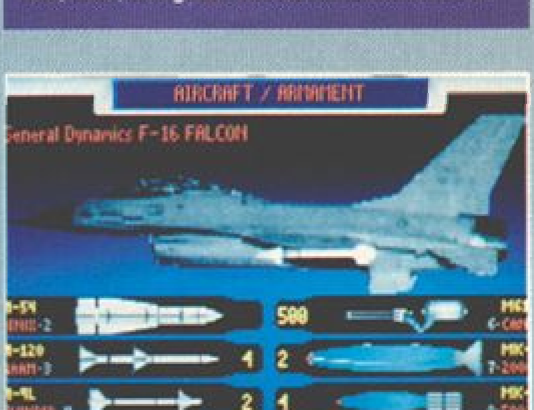


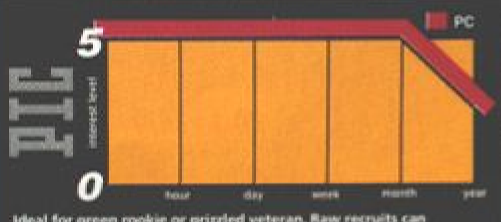
With your flying skills and the F-23's superior firepower, it won't be long before America is once again the Land of the Free. Or will it...?

DINNER, DINNER, DINNER, DINNER, DINNERMAN!

***Jetfighter II* was designed by Bob Dinnerman, who began his career in game design with the arcade company Bally. There he created *Discs of Tron*, based on the gladiatorial matches between frisbee-armed combatants in the the film *Tron*. (The interested or nostalgic may be interested to know that Loriciels recently released a very similar game called *Disc*.)**

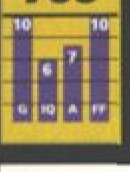
Bob became interested in producing the most realistic affordable flight sim possible, and towards this end set up RD Technologies, where he created the excellent *F/A-18 Interceptor* on the Amiga for Electronic Arts (which shares mány of the control features and aesthetic touches of *Jetfighter II*, albeit very pared down) and, later, *Jetfighter: The Adventure* on the PC.





Ideal for green rookie or grizzled veteran. Raw recruits can instantly practice flight, taking off or landing in conditions as simple or as complex as required, while the varied missions would keep even the infamous Baron Richthofen busy for a couple of months. If you don't fancy tackling the Adventure, you can practice any of the 125 (count 'em - I did) missions.

ACE RATING
935



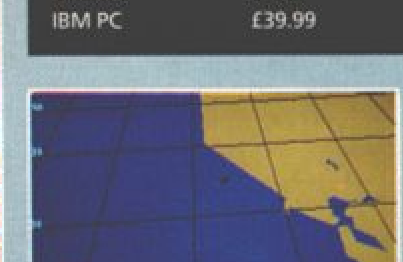
IBM PC

Jetfighter II puts the 'art' into state-of-the-art 3D - polygon-based games rarely achieve this level of beauty. And it's fast too, even on an 8MHz snail. The sound effects disappoint in comparison, but they do their job.

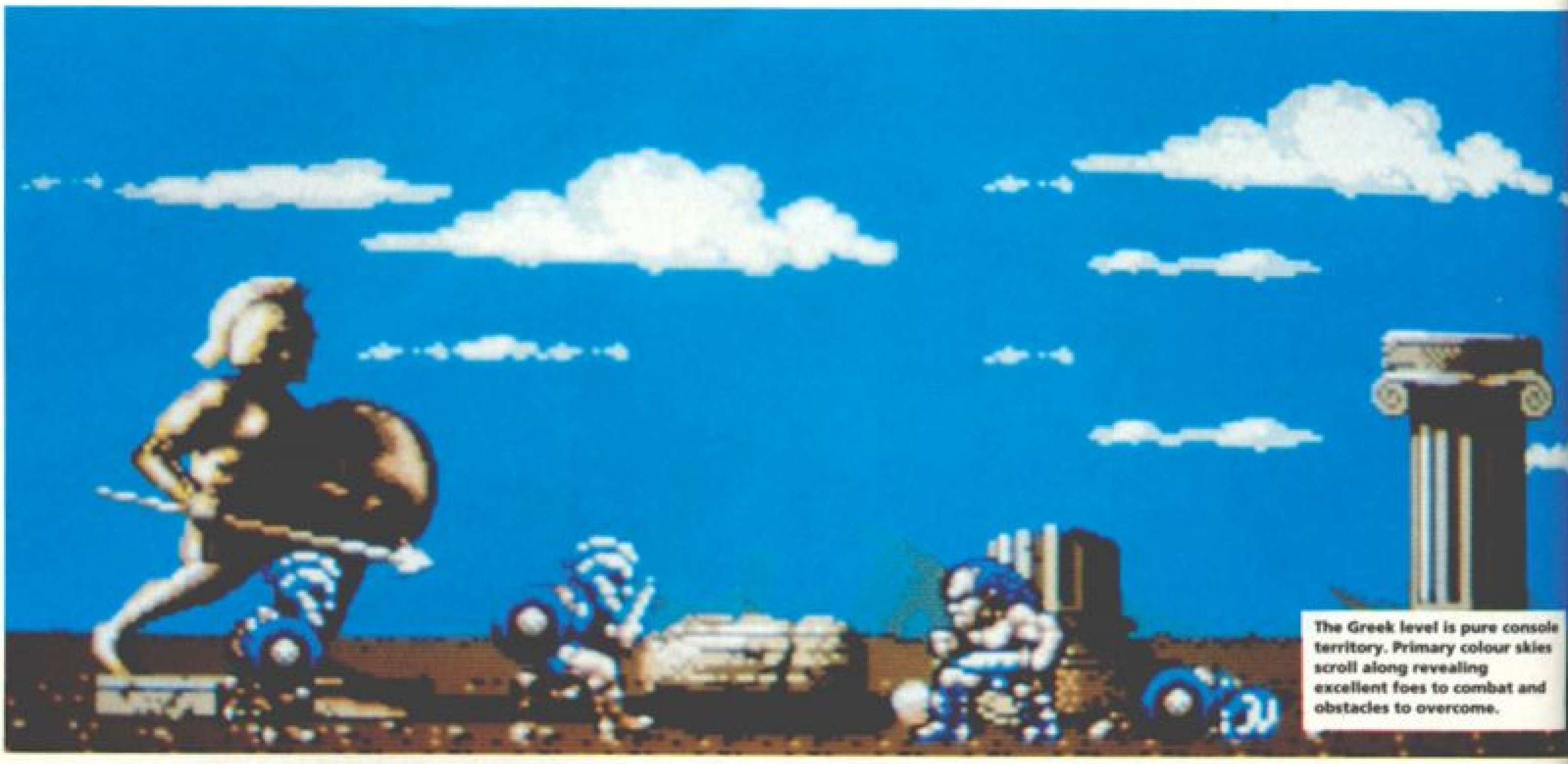
What more can I say? Simply superb.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
IBM PC	£39.99	OUT NOW

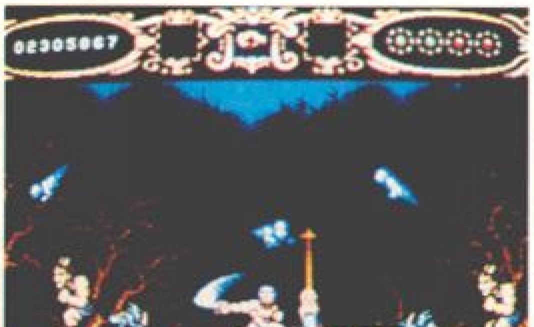


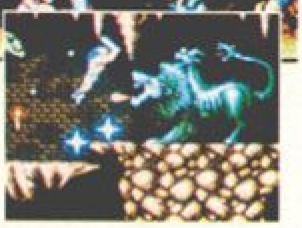
Before each mission, you're given a briefing and a satellite overview of the combat zone with any locations of import marked. Having accepted the mission, you're taken on a dizzying ride down through the stratosphere to your waiting jet's cockpit.

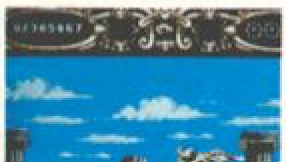


The Greek level is pure console territory. Primary colour skies scroll along revealing excellent foes to combat and obstacles to overcome.

MYTH







(above) Trussed up like a turkey, a voluptuous maiden awaits your rescue.

(right top) Distinct from the well-received 8-Bit counterpart, the action in the 16-Bit versions is concentrated, to say the least.

(right bottom) Greece 2! Assaulted on all sides, our muscle bound hero brandishes his sword in a flurry of whizz-line activity.

One of the best received 8-Bit original products of last year is currently being transformed into a 16-Bit opus. How's it going for SYSTEM 3?

The original premise for Myth - a contemporary hero placed into an extraordinary fantasy world, pitted against all manner of incredible beasts - was perhaps, along with the excellent graphics, the game's main appeal.

It made a nice change to control a believable and vulnerable character as opposed to yet another muscle-bound clod who looks tougher than anyone else in the game.

So, it's perhaps a surprise that System 3 have opted for exactly that approach, doing away with Mr Average and instead bestowing a hefty sword and amazing musculature upon the player. The decision to opt for a more steroids-and-loincloth angle, those at the System claim, will widen the game's appeal for the 16 bit and console market.

Myth is now a 50/50 mix of hack'n'slash carnage and object orientated puzzle solving. The player must perform a series of Herculean tasks through a suite of historic settings, defending himself from attack from all manner of hostile creatures.

Another distinction from the 8-Bit game is that the action takes place on a much larger scale. Owing to scrolling limitations on the lesser machines, most of the action for a level would be kept on a set of around five screens. The benefit of this is that the player can plan their route through a stage more effectively, since they are afforded a better overview of the level. The 16-Bit versions, while offering much more attractive, larger graphics which scroll continually, keeping the hero in the centre of the screen at all times, don't allow such forward planning.

The result is that the game will play on a much more instantaneous level, with the player reacting to situations *rather than planning them;* an appealing prospect for fans of heart-stopping reflex-play, but perhaps not destined to be regarded as a change for the better among the thinking set.

●Jim Douglas

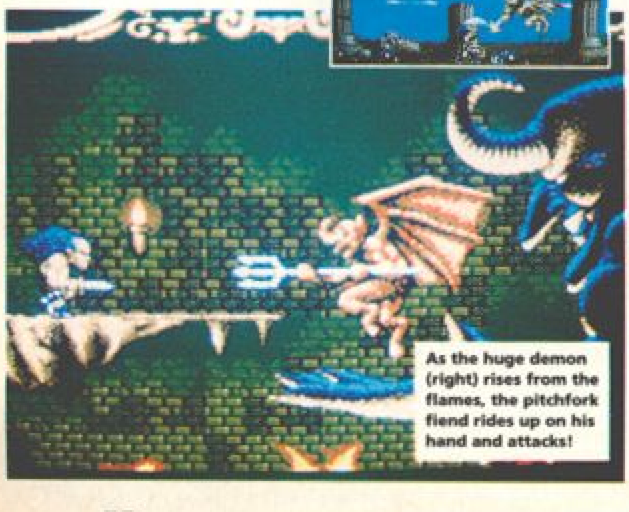
ACE PREPLAY

- Excellent console-style graphics and gameplay
- More foes to combat
- Big "event" feel

- Lack of the impression of scale
- Less accent on the thinking, more on the action.

Release Details

AMIGA	£25.99	May
ST	£25.99	May



As the huge demon (right) rises from the flames, the pitchfork fiend rides up on his hand and attacks!

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THE One for ST GAMES

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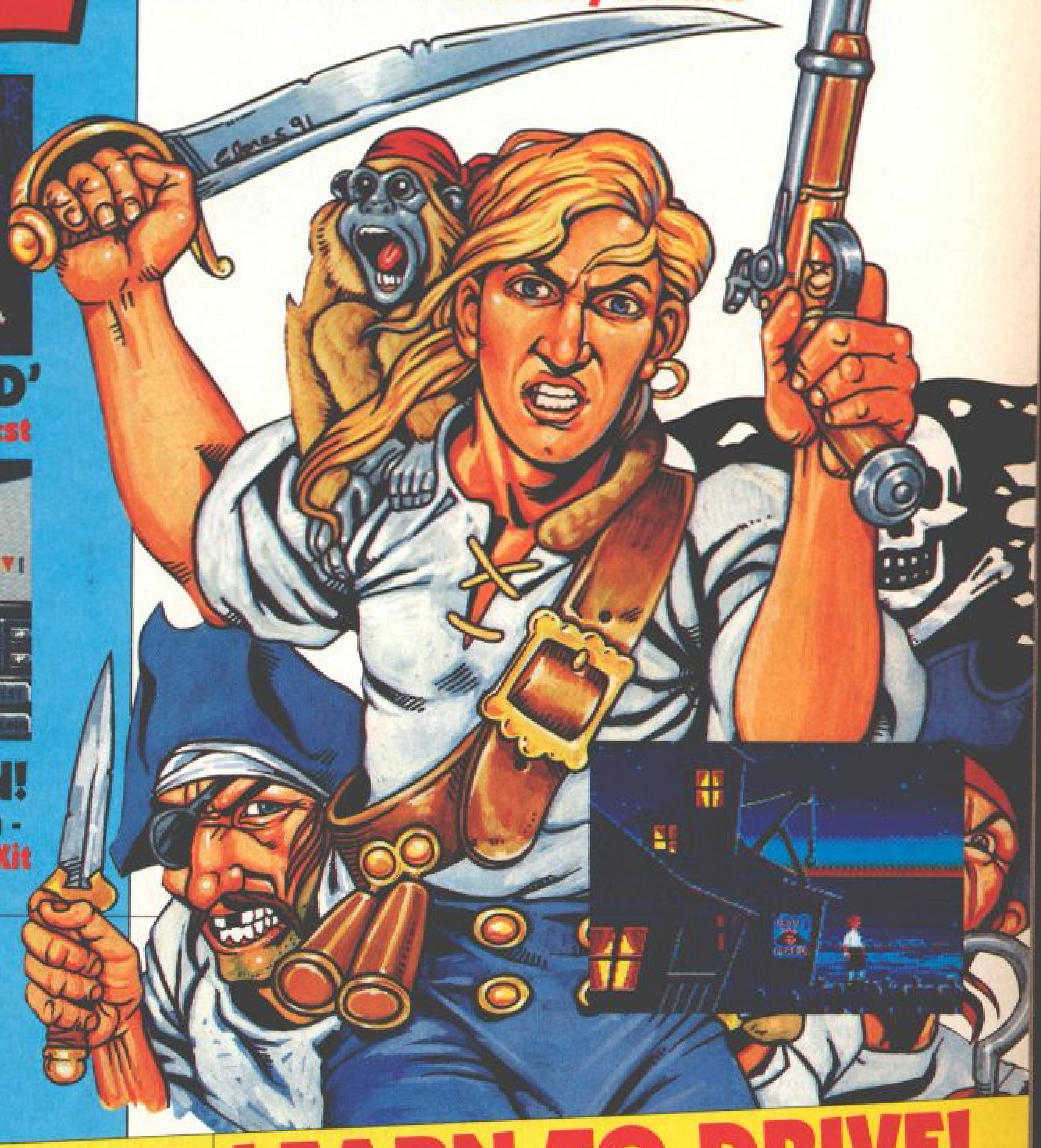
BUCKLE YOUR SWASH!

Lucasfilm Lets Rip With The Secret Of Monkey Island



GET ON 'BOARD'

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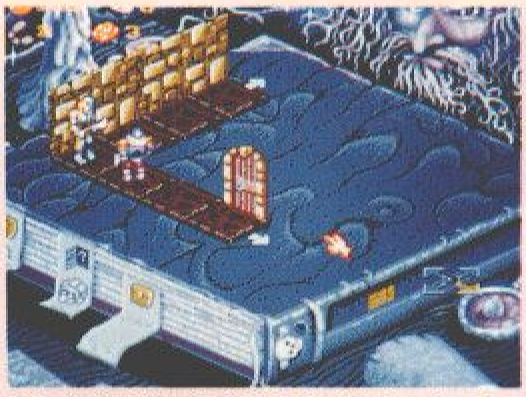
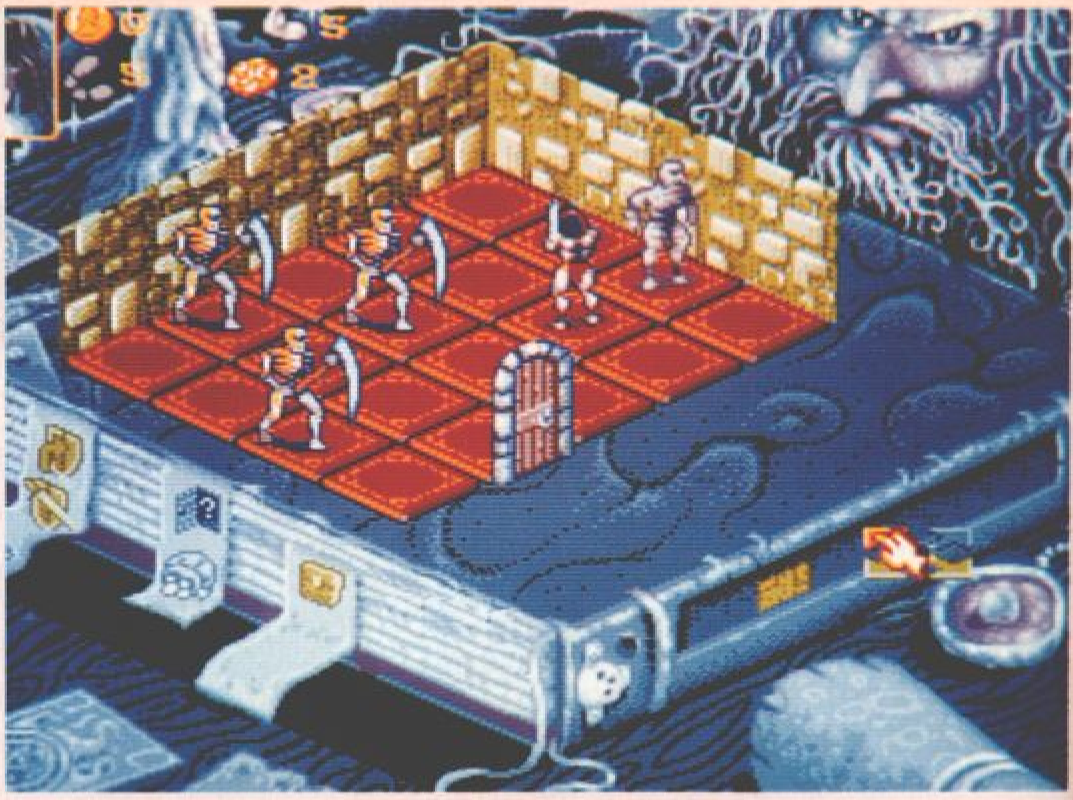


Doing the Zombie shuffle in the dank and dark corridors of Morcar's dungeon. This bloke looks like he needs to get out in the sun a bit more - he's as pale as a ghost!



HERO QUEST

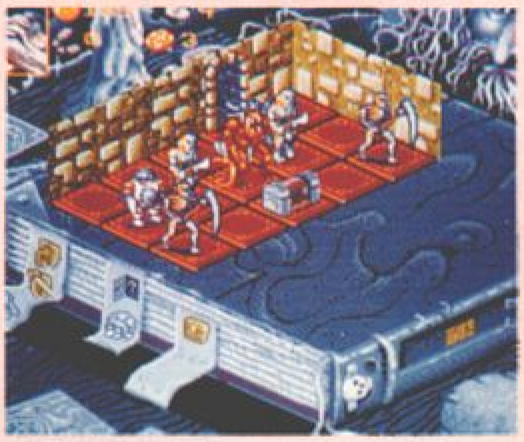
All a-board! Lost pieces and cheating kid brothers are a thing of the past with GREMLIN's RPG tie-in

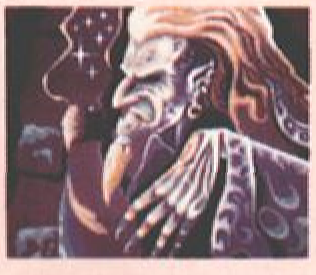
Board games. Don't you just hate 'em? They conjure up bad memories of wet summer holiday afternoons, trapped in the house with a little brother who forces you, much against your better judgement, to play yet another game of *Monopoly*. Then, as soon as you start winning, he throws tantrums, sneaks hotels onto his properties and tries to steal money from the bank when your back's turned. Fortunately this computer version of the top-selling RPG allows you to eliminate any annoying siblings altogether.

Hero Quest is a game for one to four players, each controlling characters with differing strength and intelligence capabilities. For example, the Wizard and Elf, although relatively feeble in comparison to the Dwarf and Barbarian, have the ability to cast a variety of spells.

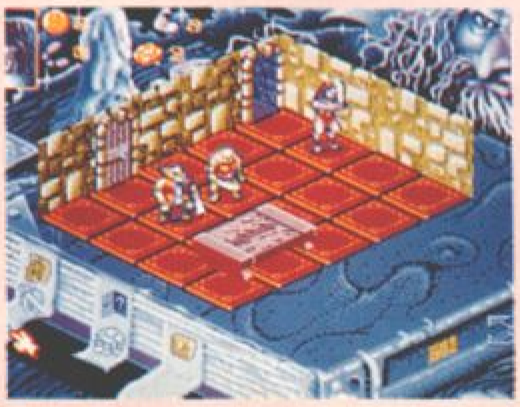
The brave adventurers must complete fourteen quests, each set in a large dungeon populated by the forces of Chaos, and culminating in a big showdown with the evil magician Morcar. The board game required one person to play the role of Morcar but here the computer controls all his actions and movements.

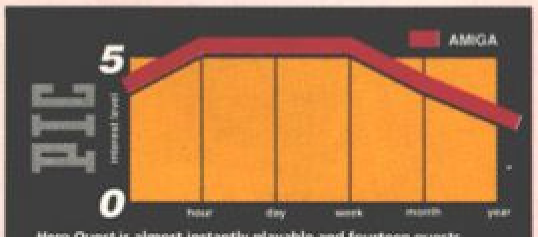
The game begins with an excellent intro and a catchy atmospheric soundtrack. Before each quest there's a basic overview of the dangerous task awaiting the brave explorers. The player is then asked to select and customise a character. If playing on your own you can control all the characters if you want. There's an option to save your current character together with any equipment for use in future missions.





The ever-evil Morcar himself. Played by the computer, he controls the actions of the myriad monsters lurking in the mysterious subterranean labyrinth.





Hero Quest is almost instantly playable and fourteen quests should keep you glued to the screen for a long time. Anyone hungry for more should keep their eyes open for the expansion disks due for release in the next few months.

ACE RATING

815

G	IQ	A	FF
8	8	7	8

AMIGA

A well-designed front end, attractive graphics and catchy soundtracks create a superbly easy-to-use playing environment. All that plus a large number of fiendish puzzles to solve provide a hugely enjoyable and long-lasting challenge. A fantastic game - in every sense!

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£25.53	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£25.53	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£25.53	IMMINENT

All actions are mouse controlled via an icon-driven menu system. Each location, either a corridor or a room, is divided into a number of movement squares. Players move in turns, during which they can search for objects, traps or hidden doors, fight the enemy, look at the map, perform actions on items currently being carried, unlock doors or move to neighbouring squares provided they're unoccupied. The number of moves available in each turn is determined by the value displayed on the computer-rolled dice.

During each quest the player will pick up gold coins and precious jewels which can be used to buy new weapons and armour. Magic potions, treasure chests and tool kits are just a few of the many other items waiting to be discovered in the dungeons and, if used properly, add to your playing capabilities.

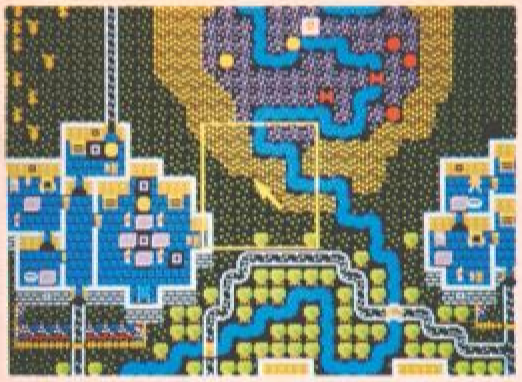
Hero Quest is one of a few boardgame conversions that give you much more than the original, particularly the advantage (albeit antisocial) that the game can be played by a single player.

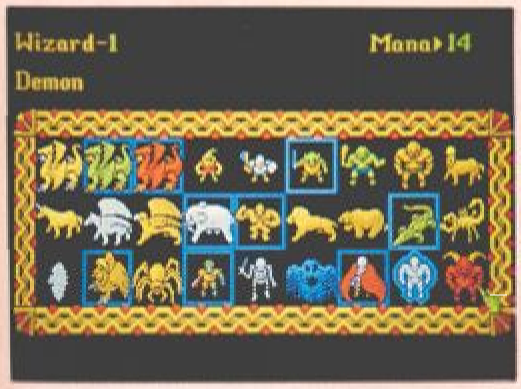
Excellent isometric-3D graphics, brilliant soundtracks, enigmatic atmosphere and superb attention to detail make *Hero Quest* an absolute must for the board-game veterans and all RPG enthusiasts.

● **Tom Trosclanka-Carroll**

LORDS OF CHAOS

Is BLADE SOFTWARE at the cutting edge of RPGs?



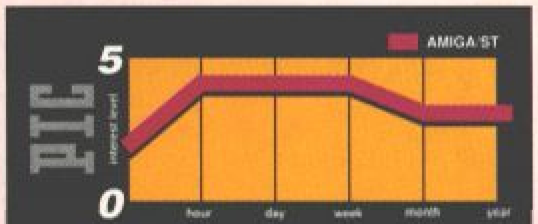


(Top far left)
This screen allows the player to scroll around the game world.
(Bottom far left)
The Summoning Spell screen. Simply click on the monster you want to meet.

In the Old World there were no wars, plagues or disasters. The benevolent ruling Arch Mages cast powerful spells to hold the forces of Chaos at bay. But at a cost. The spells produced harmful side effects - flora and fauna twisted into strange forms and the dead rose from their graves to haunt the living. The populace grew unruly and a great Civil War broke out, splitting the once-peaceful society into many warring factions.

The only survivors were the Mages. They took sanctuary in Limbo and watched as Chaos took reign. Eventually these great wizards grew restless, and each ventured out to conquer the New Worlds - to become Lords of Chaos.

LoC is an interactive multi-level strategy adventure for 1-4 players. Each person controls a wizard who must use magical power to overcome the perils peculiar to each world and ultimately to find the other wizards, destroy them and escape back to Limbo.

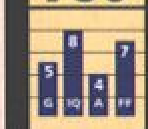


Takes a while to get into and provided the basic graphics don't scare you off *Lords of Chaos* should prove addictive and rewarding. The three different worlds provide a long-lasting challenge.

And if this doesn't sound enough you can buy an expansion kit, with two more worlds to be explored...

ACE RATING

750



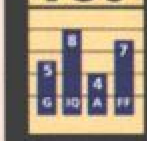
AMIGA

Graphically unattractive, but the interesting gameplay and reasonably complex puzzles will keep you awake at night.

Probably...

ACE RATING

750



ATARI ST

Shares all the Amiga's strengths and weaknesses. A good buy for both the committed RPGer and the shoot 'em-up fan who fancies shifting his brain out of neutral for a while.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW

The game is played using a mouse and incorporates a well-designed icon-driven control system. As you move the cursor over the icons and on-screen objects a brief descriptive message appears, which neatly saves you the hassle of constantly referring to the manual.

The screen is divided into three areas, the largest being a window containing an overhead view of the area around the player's wizard, with icons or creature characteristics to the right and a message window section below. Surprisingly, the programmers decided to go for simplistic 2D graphics which, while looking a bit dated, make the game more playable as the player doesn't have to concentrate on confusing movement control often found in flashier 3D graphic masterpieces.

The overall game design strongly resembles a classic board game, with each player maoving in 'turns'. The gameplay is entirely strategic and requires no 'arcade' skills. Combat, for example, is resolved by simply comparing the relevant creatures' attack and defence ratings with victory going to the creature with the higher score.

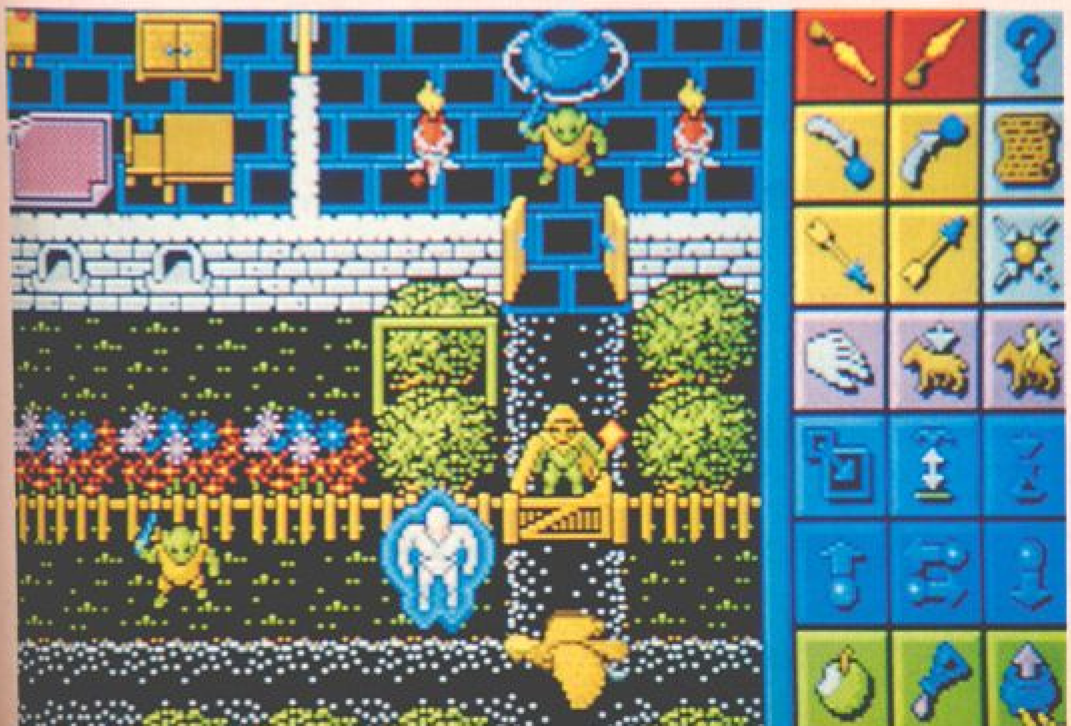
A wizard wouldn't be a wizard without his magical powers. At your disposal are 45 spells which vary from world to world and include Magic Bolt, Lightning, Magic Fire, Enchant, Flood and Tangle Vine among many others. You can even summon creatures to do some of your dirty work. All creatures have different characteristics and depending on their nature they can be flown, ridden, used to open doors or recover treasures from dangerous locations.

Whichever creature you're controlling every action it performs uses up a certain number of its own 'Action' and 'Stamina' points. You are strongly advised to plan your moves well ahead to avoid running out of energy just when a scraps brewing.

Although the basic idea of the game is brilliant, there are some serious presentation drawbacks and the game has the look of a classy 8-bit game. For instance, it would have been nice if combat was accompanied by some fancy animation à la *Battle Chess*. The use of sound is also far from perfect - apart from some digitised speech in the intro and a few game effects there is nothing but constant silence.

On the whole, *LoC* is an enjoyable RPG which will provide hours if not weeks of rewarding challenge for dedicated RPG fans and the more casual player seeking a mysterious journey into the world of magic.

● **Tom Trosclanka-Carroll**



This is the player's typical view of the action. The top-down graphics may not be the flashiest ever, but at least they're clear and uncluttered.

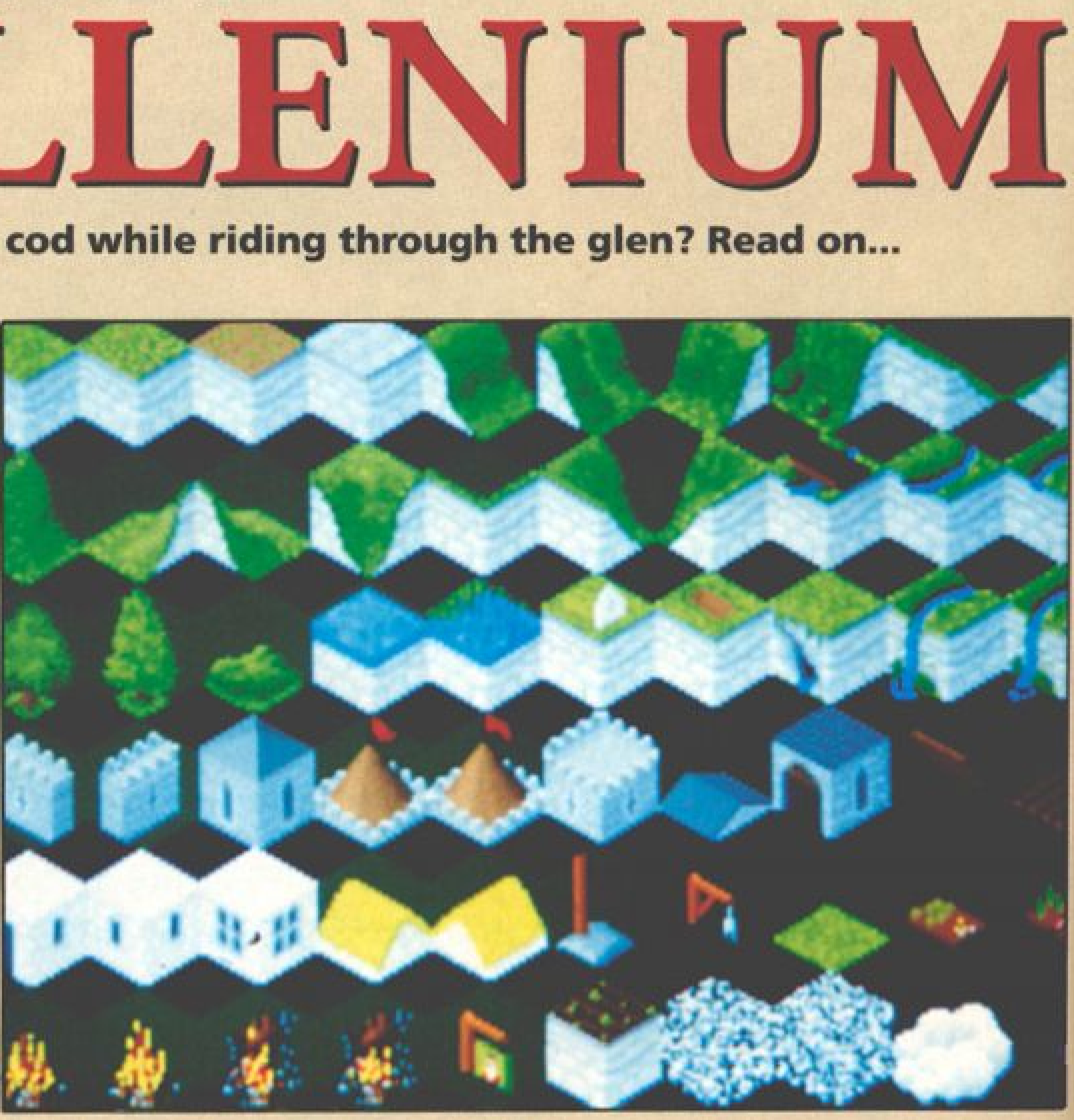
THE NEW MILLENIUM

Fancy meeting a cybernetic cod while riding through the glen? Read on...

ROBIN HOOD

Longtime readers may remember that some time ago ACE reported that Millenium were working on a novel adventure game with a *Populous*-like viewpoint set in the rootin' tootin' Wild West. Well, that idea has undergone a few changes in the last few months, and the arid cactus-strewn plains of Texas have evolved into the verdant greenery of Nottingham Forest and environs, where Robin and his Merry Band do battle against the nefarious Sheriff and his Norman nasties.

The player, as you'd expect, takes control of the legendary giver to the poor and taker from the rich. Your first task as this famed philanthropist is to seek out Little John, Will Scarlet, Friar Tuck *et al* and form your band of thieves. Once this has been accomplished you can concentrate on the main job of routing the foul Sheriff from Nottingham Castle.



(*Below right*): When two or three are gathered together then you know something important is happening. This one's not for anything important - it's just an announcement by the Town Crier that Robin is about to be hung...

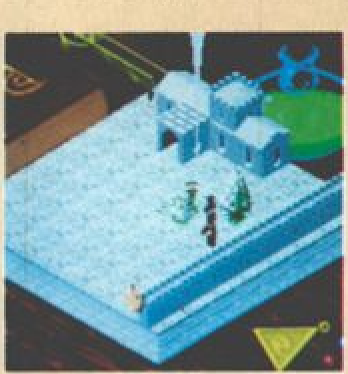
(*Above*): Robin's has the supernatural ability to summon up a plan map of his environment, with the various inhabitants indicated by tiny flashing dots. Robin can be made to go to any location simply by clicking on it.

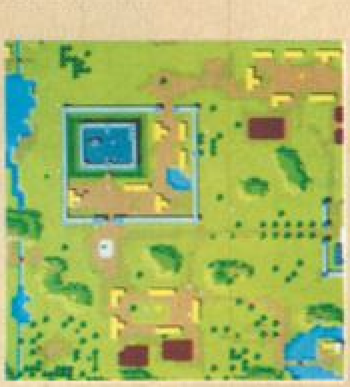
All game interaction is controlled by mouse. Generally this entails clicking on an icon at the side of the screen and then clicking on one of the character sprites milling about on screen, so that you can do something such as fire an arrow at them, talk to them or follow them. As the game progresses you'll find extra equipment and acquire magic powers from the pagan god Herne that'll increase the number of control icons and allow you to summon your men with a toot on your horn and even zap a foe with a magic lightning bolt!

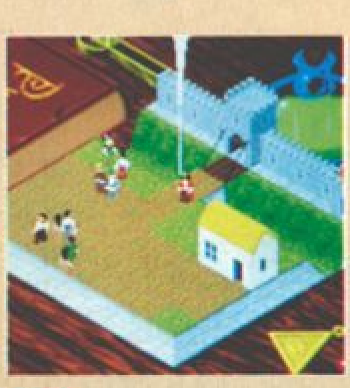
The graphics are petite but full of character - there's no problem recognising who everybody is meant to be. These small sprites - and consequent memory savings - mean each can have a fairly varied range of animations. The game itself is great fun, with the citizens all going about their daily business unless Robin steps in to mess things up. There's also a refreshing vein of whimsical humour throughout that makes the game very endearing. Blow the horn, for example, and up pops a speech bubble saying 'Toot! Toot!'.

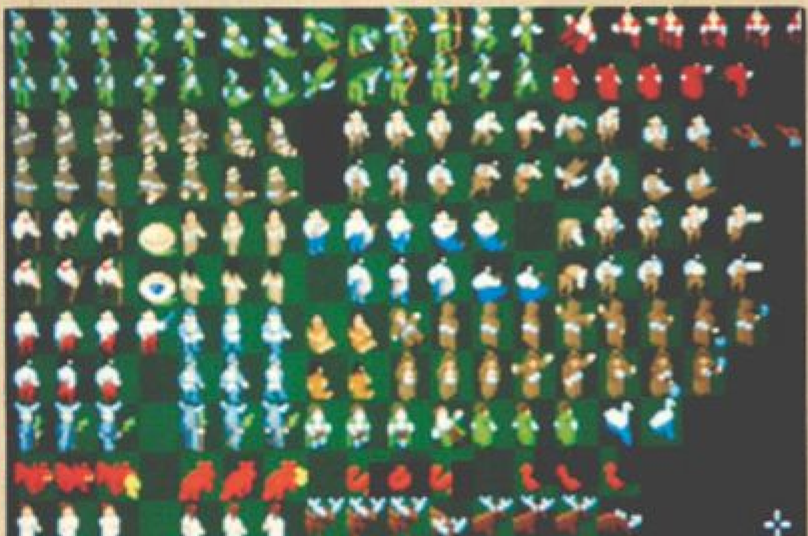
Robin Hood is scheduled for release this October on Amiga, ST and PC, and it has to be said that Millenium's timing really couldn't be better. Due for a Summer release at, as they say, a cinema near you is *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. Starring flavour-of-the-month Kevin '*Dances with Wolves*' Costner, film pundits reckon the it could be one of this year's big blockbusters. If Hood fever hits Britain, who knows what may happen...? Either way, *Robin Hood* is sure to become another string to Millenium's bow.

● **David Upchurch**









(*Above left*): All four seasons are represented in *Robin Hood*. Here, Robin engages two monks in conversation in the half-completed, snow-covered abbey. As construction of the Christian Temple advances, Robin's pagan powers weaken, placing a time limit on his activities.

(*Above centre*): Each of the small (but perfectly formed) characters in *Robin Hood* has a comprehensive range of animations. Note the red dragon at the bottom left of the screen - and that couldn't be a turtle just below could it...?

(*Left*): The landscape is constructed, *Populous*-like, from a series of blocks viewed in an isometric-3D perspective.

ROBOCOD

Following his ignominious defeat at the fins of Agent Pond, the dastardly Doctor Maybe retreated to a secret hideout to sulk. While he sat alone in his darkened refuge, brooding over his shame, a new and even more devilish plan formed in the Doctor's cunning brain - a scheme so dreadful it would bring the whole World to its metaphorical knees.

Far away at a North Pole Toy Factory, Santa Claus was hard at work making toys to bring happy smiles to the faces of the little kiddies come Christmas Day. But Santa's tasks were suddenly halted by the surprise invasion of Doctor Maybe and his gang. The bumbling rolly-polly do-gooder stood no chance, and was soon trussed up like the proverbial Christmas Turkey.

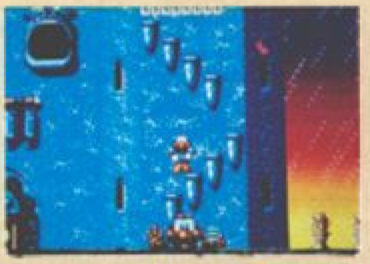
Enter Robocod. Half fish. Half machine. All cod. The titanium tuna must enter Santa's workshops, now gone haywire due to the maniac machinations of Maybe, and rescue everyone's favourite beardy.

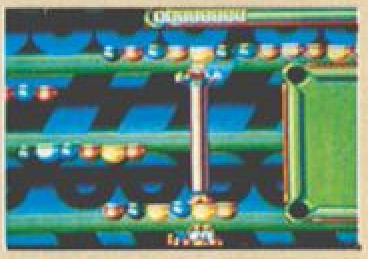
I guess you could call *Robocod* a sea-quel to *James Pond*. The new game features ten levels, each split into eight sections. Each section will consist of thirty screens of platform-orientated thrills - that makes the whole game an incredible 1600 screens big!

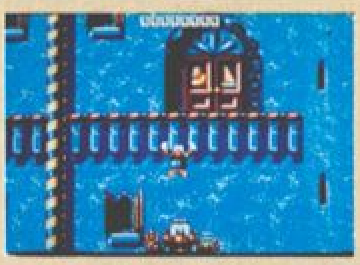
Robocod can jump, monkey swing along overhead beams and even stretch his bionic torso to reach high platforms. Each workshop is populated by all manner of toys gone mad and all with a sudden taste for fish. In his defence Robocod wields a vicious-looking mallet.

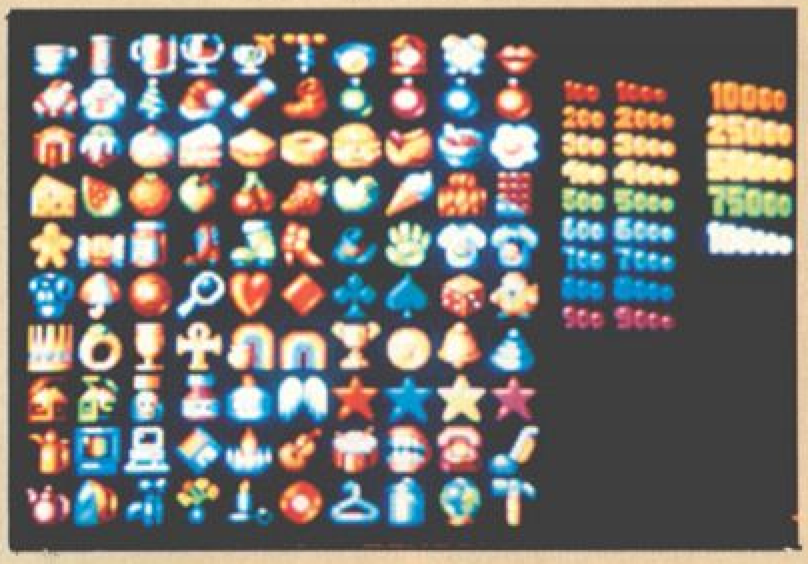
So far, work seems to be progressing very well. On the Amiga programmer and graphic designer Chris Sorrell has achieved some slick full-screen multiway scrolling, and Robocod is just as cute and agile as any Italian plumber you could care to mention. Can the gameplay make the Mario mark? Find out when *Robocod* appears on Amiga and ST this November.

● **David Upchurch**









***(Far left top)*: This shots from outside Santa's toy factory, which acts as a mission select screen. Each doorway leads to a series of platform-style perils.**

***(Far Left Centre)*: And... stretch! Inside the toy workshop Robocod has an uplifting**

***(Far left bottom)*: The range of bonus items waiting to be discovered by the plucky poisson is huge. It's amazing how much detail and colour Chris can pack into a tiny 16 x 16 pixel square.**

***(Far left centre)*: Monkey swing, monkey do.**

CHINTO'S REVENGE

Young Chinto is a man with a mission. Many years ago, the evil Dragon Overlord's merciless henchmen raided Chinto's home and in a fit of mindless violence put his parents to the sword. Chinto, too, would have been slain, but the callous villains didn't see the small boy huddled in the darkened corner of the room, watching in terror as his loved ones were cruelly killed.

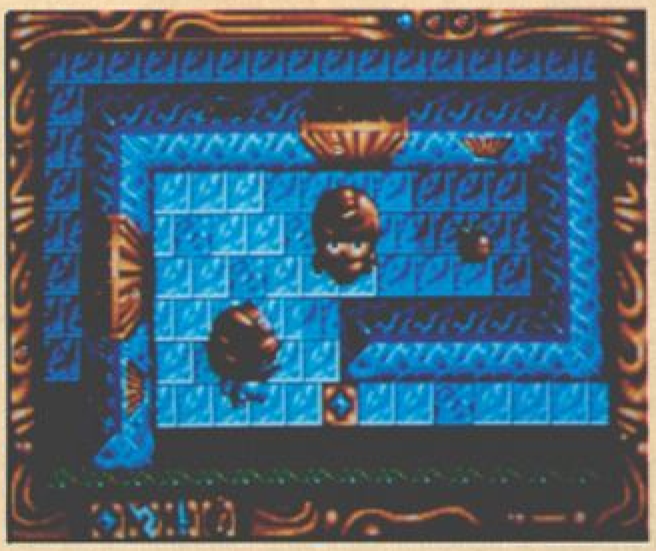
Left an orphan, Chinto swore revenge against the Overlord and his cronies. While other children played in the streets, the dour Chinto devoted his adolescence to learning the various arts of combat, in order to prepare himself for the day when he would confront the murderers and bring justice down on their heads.

Chinto's Revenge is an arcade adventure with an overhead scrolling *Gauntlet*-like view of the action. Interestingly, the game is based around just one big level made up of 400 screens of woods, towns and castles. Millenium boss Ian Saunter claims it takes three minutes to scroll uninterrupted from one side of the map to the other. In addition there are several small sub-levels, like caves and dungeons, to discover.

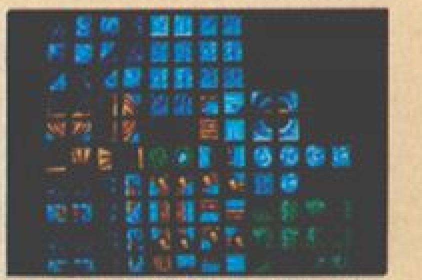
Programmer Wing Lai, who previously wrote *Microprose Soccer* and Millenium's *Cloud Kingdom* on the Amiga and ST, is programming the game on a battered 1040ST. His biggest headache so far has been maintaining a screen update of 25 frames per second while software scrolling the screen and moving the sprites (of which there can be up to four 48x32 pixel main characters and four 16x16 pixel missiles on screen at any one time). On the hardware-laden Amiga this should be less of a problem, resulting in larger scroll area and animated backgrounds.

Chinto's Revenge is due for a July release on Amiga and ST.

● **David Upchurch**



***(Above)*: All the action is viewed in an interesting and different top-down perspective, hence the splayed out walls (what Ian Saunter calls "the Toblerone effect") and the large head/small feet characters.**



The 16-colour backgrounds are built up from a range of 16 x 16 pixel square 'tiles', which can then be fitted together in a variety of permutations. All the graphics have been designed by Paul Dobson and Rob Chapman.

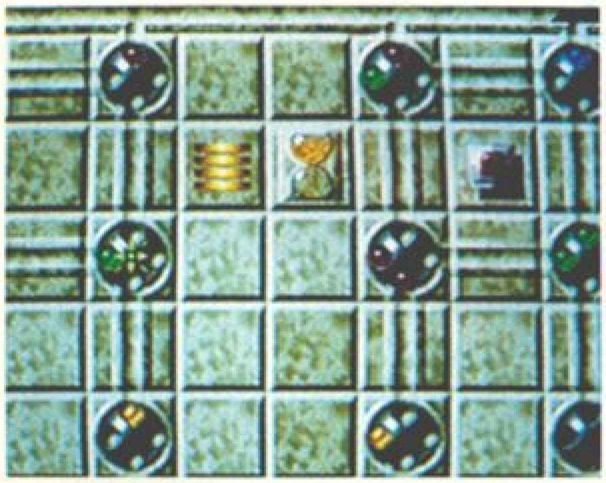
***(Left)*: The atmospheric and graphically stylish intro sequence explains the origin of tragic Chinto's quest for revenge.**

L+O-G÷I×C√A=L

What a lot of spherical objects! You'll need all your marbles to cope with RAINBOW ARTS' fascinating fast-action puzzler

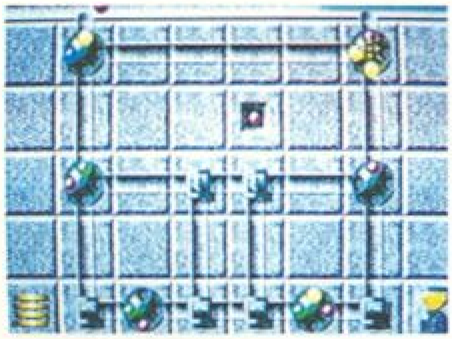
Logical is a bit of a rarity; a thought-provoking fast-action game which is genuinely as addictive as the blurb claims. OK, it's derived from dozens of vaguely similar titles - *Tetris, Puznik,* even *Marble Madness* if you want to look at it that way, but the finished game seems wholly original and is a terrific challenge.

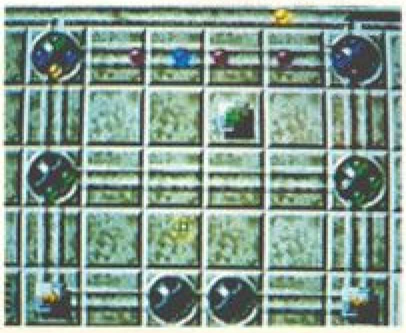
There's a sensible copy-protection system depending on a coloured code card (remember *Jet Set Willy*); once through that you're straight into the ball-rolling action.



(Above): Everything you need to know is provided graphically. TThat purple square, for example, tells you the colour of the marble about to come into play.

(Right): Cunning. Intriguing. Puzzling. *Logical*.





One of the early levels and already you're in big trouble. Those four marbles rolling along that top gutter are going to cause headaches later!

Along the top of the screen runs a track; along the track come coloured marbles which drop down channels into revolving disks. Each disk has four marble slots, and is connected to other disks by further channels.

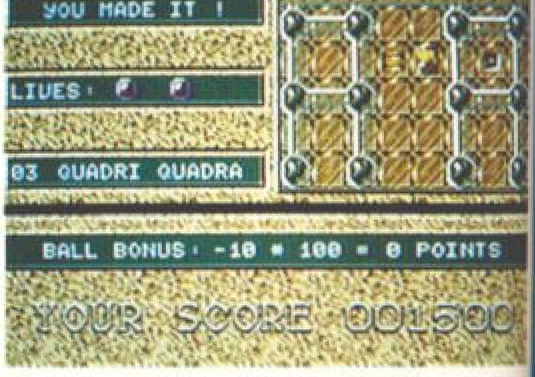
Your task is to rotate the disks (by clicking with the right mouse button) and launch the marbles (click left) in such a way that each disk on the screen becomes filled with four marbles of the same colour. Do that and the disk explodes (though it remains working); once all the disks are exploded, you move on to the next of the 99 levels.

It sounds too simple to hold any challenge, but of course there are complications. One display shows how many marbles are in motion; more than four, and you cannot launch any new ones. There's a time limit for each level (of course); and other elements include colour stoppers which only let through marbles of a particular colour, changers which alter the colour of marbles passing through, direction arrows which turn some channels into one-way streets, traffic lights which dictate the colour of marble which must be used to fill a particular disk, and colour handicaps which dictate that you have to fill a disk with a particular combination of colours.

There are some aids too; teleporters which allows you to jump marbles vertically or horizontally, and a preview display which tells you the colour of the next marble coming. Scores depend on the speed with which you finish the level, and any colour handicap bonuses you have racked up; at each level you are given a password which allows you to restart the game at the furthest point you have reached, and if you complete all 99 levels you can access a screen editor which allows you to create your own *Logical* puzzles.

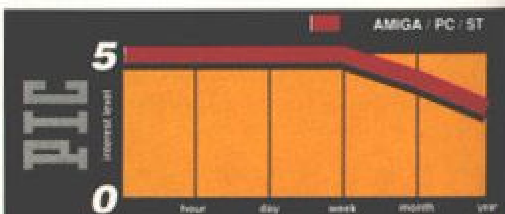
With excellent graphics (in a choice of four styles), good music and sound effects and compelling gameplay, *Logical* is going to give you some sleepless nights.

● **Chris Jenkins**



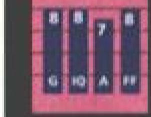
YOU MADE IT !
LIVES :
03 QUADRI QUADRA
BALL BONUS : -10 * 100 = 0 POINTS
YOUR SCORE 001500

Between each levels you're given a preview of the challenge ahead and a recap on the scores on the doors and the number of lives remaining.



The simplest games are often the best. *Logical* couldn't be a simpler idea, but it will drive you to distraction until you have completed all 99 levels. After that, the game designer lets you torture yourself even more.

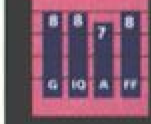
ACE RATING
895



AMIGA

A simple graphic display is well-implemented with good use of colour and texture. Add entertaining music and sound effects and well thought-out game controls, and you have a winner. It doesn't push the Amiga to its limits, but neither does it miss any opportunites to make the most of the machine.

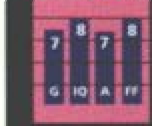
ACE RATING
895



ATARI ST

Again, the graphics and sound do justice to the machine, but note that if you have a single-sided disk drive you will not get all the music and graphic detail you will with a double-sided drive.

ACE RATING
880



IBM PC

The PC version supports the AdLib sound card, automatically switching off the built-in speaker if a card is installed Without a sound card you get only sound effects. It's still possible to play even with mono display; the marbles are marked with letters indicating their colour.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£24.99	IMMINENT

AN EMAP IMAGES PUBLICATION
ISSUE 33 • JUNE 1991
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THE One for AMIGA GAMES

The Games Guide for The Games Computer

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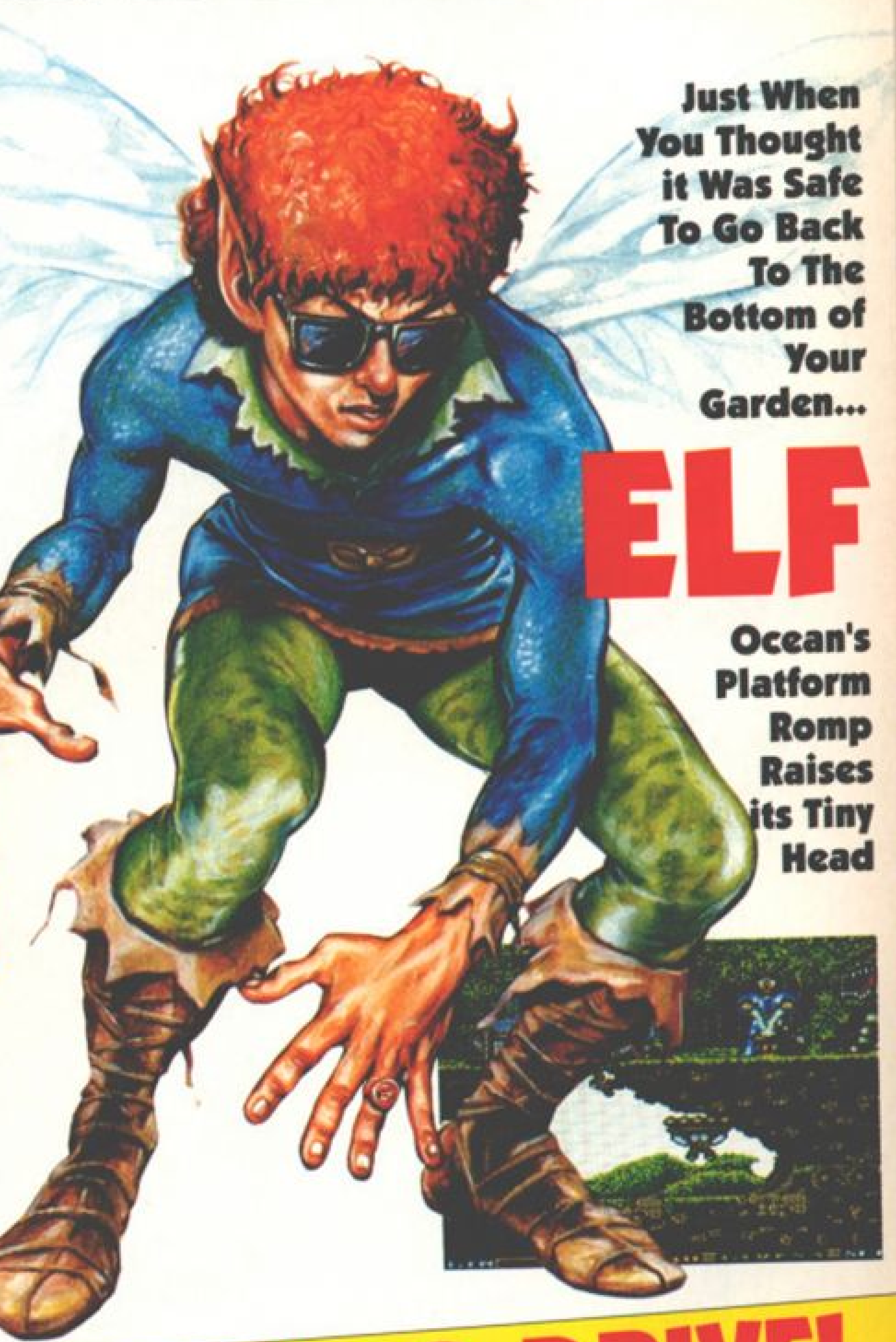
Piracy Pranks on Lucasfilm's Monkey Island™

HERO QUEST

Gremlin Sweeps the Board...

ROD-LAND

While Storm Brews Up a Cutie



Just When You Thought it Was Safe To Go Back To The Bottom of Your Garden...

ELF

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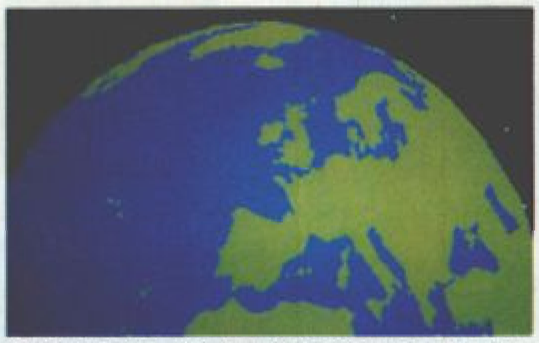
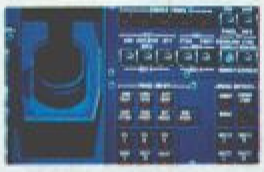
HIGH FLYING

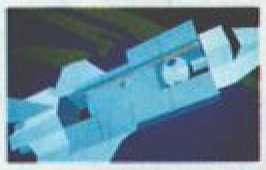
SHUT



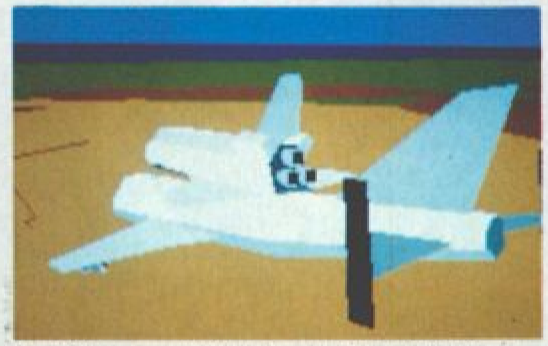
The planet Earth is all its glory. It rotates, complete with day and night cycles, the surface geography is accurate and the major constellations appear in the Heavens - just like real! While it may be a dream to behold, it's a nightmare to program: the surface topography is created from 512 polygons mapped onto the surface of a sphere.



You want controls? We got 'em! This is just a small fraction of the huge range of dials and knobs you'll need to master. Thank goodness for the superb help facility.



Getting the items in the bay to correctly prioritise, so that objects in the background are correctly cut off by objects in the foreground and so on, has been a real programming headache for Vektor Grafix.



Your job here, once detached from the 747, is to glide the powerless hulk in to land on the runway below. But remember, you've no engines to pull you out of trouble...

Andy Craven, boss of Vektor Grafix, is refreshingly candid about why his company are producing a game based around the Space Shuttle: "Virgin asked us to." What they've come up a complex and highly original flight sim that models all the operations of NASA's revolutionary spacecraft - the first designed to be reusable.

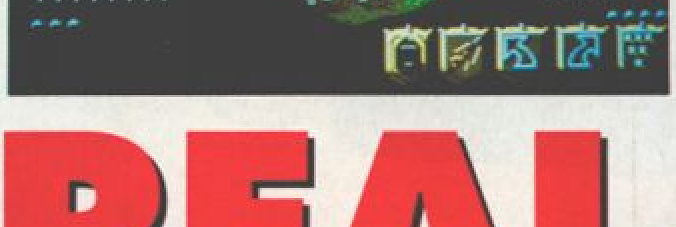
It's been a huge task, but the finished product is a fine testament to Vektor's programming skills. Andy is especially proud of the sims accuracy. So much so, that he boldly states, "I feel confident I could get in NASA's pre-flight shuttle simulator in the States and land it."

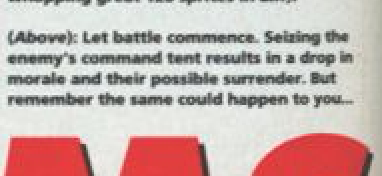
And It's not difficult to believe him. Inside the cockpit the player is presented with the bewildering sight of bank after bank of dials, buttons and levers, nearly all of which can be interacted with. Everything is realistically modelled, right down to the time it takes for the *instrument screens to* warm up!

The incredible level of accuracy has only been possible due to NASA's co-operation with the project. "They've been ace," enthuses Andy. As proof he points to the four lever-arch files bulging with documentation on every aspect of the Shuttle's operation, some of which has only been seen by less than 200 people around the World. "And I've had to read it all", he laughs.

In the final game the player will be presented with a series of missions based on real life scenarios, ranging from landing a powerless Shuttle launched from the back of a 747 to

VIRGIN don sword and shield and prepare for re-entry





(*Left*): Two armies prepare for war. Each side consists of a maximum of eight units, each made up of eight individual troops (that's a whopping great 128 sprites in all!).

(*Above*): Let battle commence. Seizing the enemy's command tent results in a drop in morale and their possible surrender. But remember the same could happen to you...

REALMS

Realms is an epic wargame set in a feudal world split into feuding factions and populated by a cosmopolitan mix of exotic humanoids, orcs, elves and dwarves. You aim is to build an empire and ultimately become ruler of the world.

This entails waging wars against your neighbours, engaging their armies and laying siege to their cities. The money to do this can only be raised by taxation - but be too harsh and you may have a civil war on your hands. This need to juggle several balls and keep them all in the air forms the basis of *Realms*' gameplay.

Realms is being written by software developers Graftgold. Steve Turner, *Realms*' designer, admits that the game's resemblance to a certain Bullfrog product gave him concern:

TTLE

propelling satellites into orbit with the aid of the robot arm to donning space suit and going on some EVA to repair a space telescope. Each mission starts, rather unsurprisingly, with launch.

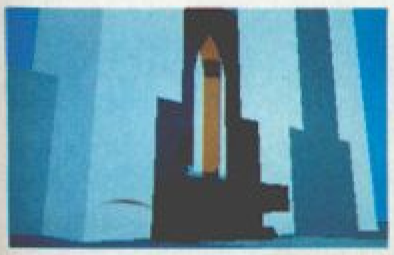
Mission control will talk you through the launch sequence, requesting that certain buttons be pressed at certain times. If this sounds a little daunting, you'd be right. But fortunately for the bewildered novice Vektor have designed a brilliant graded help facility.

At its most helpful the program will take the player to the button needed, centre it in the middle of the screen and put a red flashing box around it. All you've got to do is click with the mouse. At its worst your effectively left to your own devices. The intention is that the player starts with maximum help then phases it out as they become more proficient.

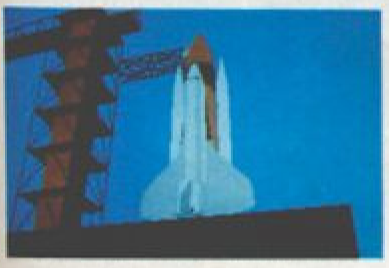
Shuttle looks set to be landmark sim. What could possibly follow it? Andy himslef is keen to do a similar game based on the Apollo missions that put US astronauts on the Moon: "That would be great - I can remember watching the landings on TV when I was a kid," he recalls. But whether this'll materialise or not is still in the balance.

In conclusion, how would Andy sum up *Shuttle*? "It's very...," he pauses for thought,"...big." Indeed, it's also one of the most ambitious and exciting sims I've ever seen. Prepare for blast off on Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC this October.

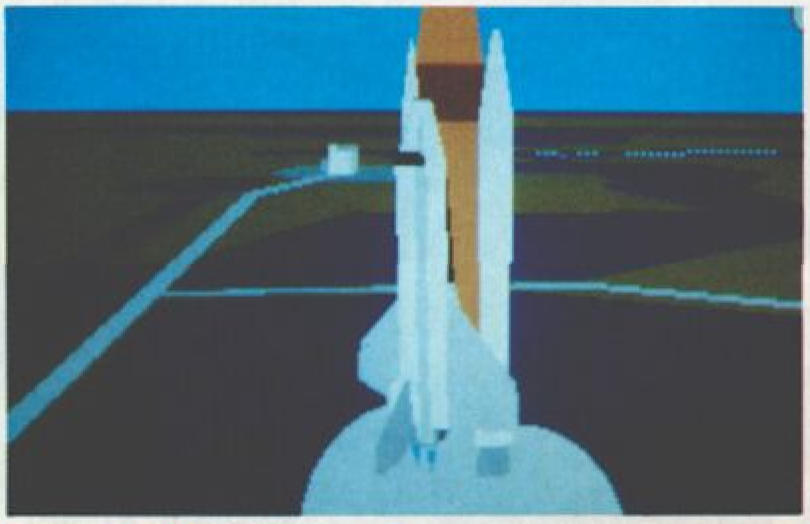
● **David Upchurch**



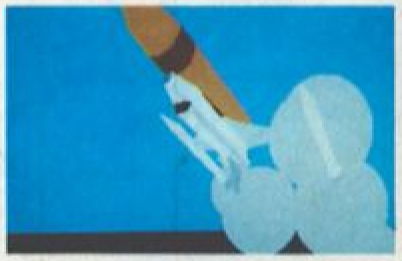
(Top): The Shuttle starts its long slow crawl from the hangar to the launch pad. In real life this takes most of the day... Luckily there are a wide range of time accelerators to let you speed things up.



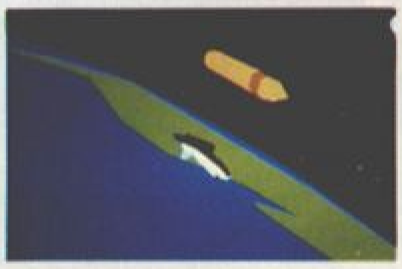
(Above): On the pad. The countdown to blast off begins. This is where you and your superb flying skills (ha!) come in



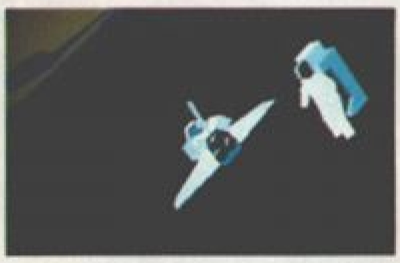
(*Left*): G-g-g-g-g-g-go! With a roar the SRBs punch the Shuttle into the sky. An awesome sight.



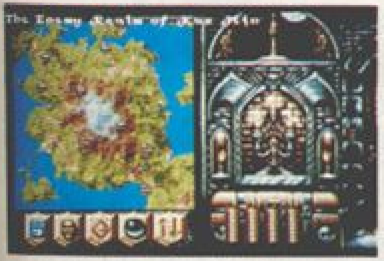
(*Bottom left*): Their fuel spent, the SRBs detach from the Shuttle. If you want you can follow one down and watch as it deploys its parachutes to land softly on the ground. When they cost so much to construct, it's definitely a case of 'waste not, want not'.



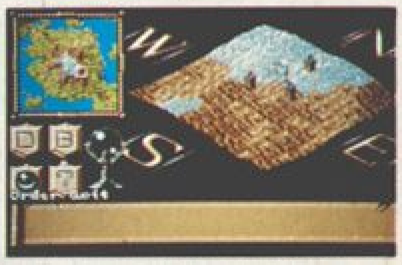
(*Bottom middle*): Having escaped the Earth's atmosphere, the main fuel tank is disposed of. This will never be used again - it'll burn up when it re-enters the Earth's atmosphere due to the heat of friction.



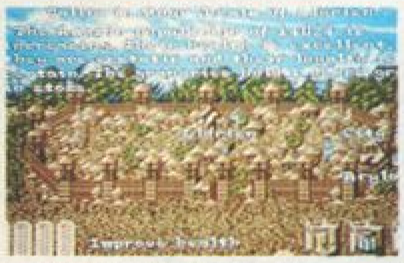
(*Below*): Now the mission begins in earnest. On these EVAs the player has full control over the astronaut's jet suit. Wonder if this spacer's name is Major Tom?



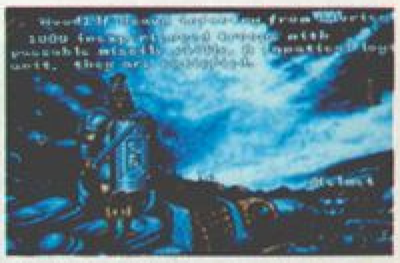
Each game world is stored on disc as 121 pieces of reference data on an 11 x 11 grid. At the start of the game these data points are fed into a fractal algorithm which miraculously generates the 50K of reference data needed for this detailed world view and the play view. Aren't fractals amazing things?



The land is constructed from a patchwork of polygons. The realistic shading is achieved by storing each land type (i.e. grass, rock, scrub) as a texture strip, fading from light at top to dark at bottom, and 'cutting' the polygon at a position along the strip depending on the landscape's slope and angle to the 'sun'.



Steve Turner says, half in jest, "We're using fractals everywhere!". And he's not lying! That ubiquitous fractal algorithm makes an appearance once again in the city generation routines, where it's used to create unique yet reproducible hamlets.



Equiping your multiracial armies couldn't be easier. Click on the weapon and armour icons in the bottom right of the screen (these will be made easier to see in the final version), and the relevant piece of kit appears on the figure standing to the left of the screen. Naturally, this all costs hard taxed for money.

"When I saw the first previews of *Powermonger* I was worried. Although working totally independently, it looked like both Graftgold and Bullfrog were going up the same path.

"When *Powermonger* came out, we were relieved to find that the two are very different. Powermonger deals with a few individuals and details them right down to their name, job and so on. I think that sort of detail is irrelevant to a game. *Realms* is more about simulating a complete world of huge cities and populations. It's basically a question of scale."

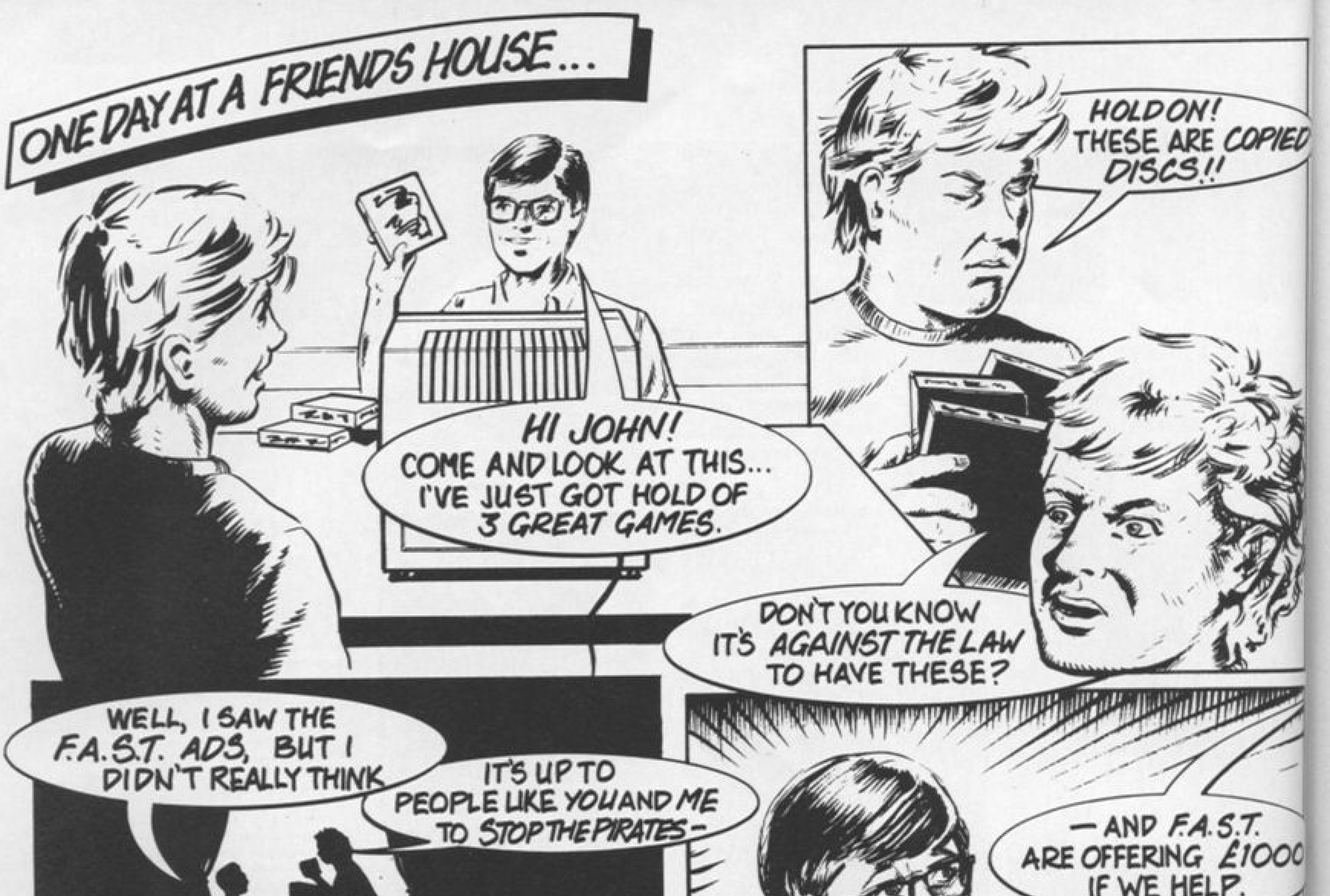
It's also a question of speed. Steve notes, "I wanted to proouce a strategy game with an arcade-like feel." While *Powermonger's* polygon-based world could tilt, rotate and zoom, this need for the landscaping routine to be jack-of-all-trades meant that the game occasionally became very sluggish. *Realms* is less flexible, but the pay-off is speed. The fixed view means that the polygon plotter can be optimised, so the game updates at ten frames per second.

Most of the information vital to play is available in a visual form. Steve notes, "I wanted to get away from lists of numbers and to show any relevant information graphically. When text is necessary it's joined together in proper sentences." Thus, for example, the money in your coffers is shown as coin piles: buy stuff and you'll see your money deplete by the amount required to do this.

But easy to control that doesn't mean it's shallow. Steve has created a complex set of rules to govern the relationships between the various game elements. Leave the game alone for a while and events will start happening of their own accord - a city may start trading with another because its food stocks are low, or an army may desert due to lack of payment.

Graftgold seem to have an unerring ability to write superb software. Remember *Rainbow Islands*? Or *Super Off Road*? All classics. *Realms* looks set to continue the legend when it's released this September on Amiga, ST and PC.

● **David Upchurch**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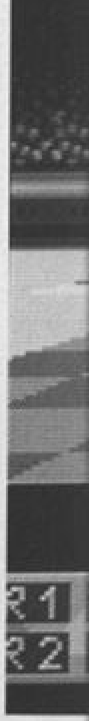

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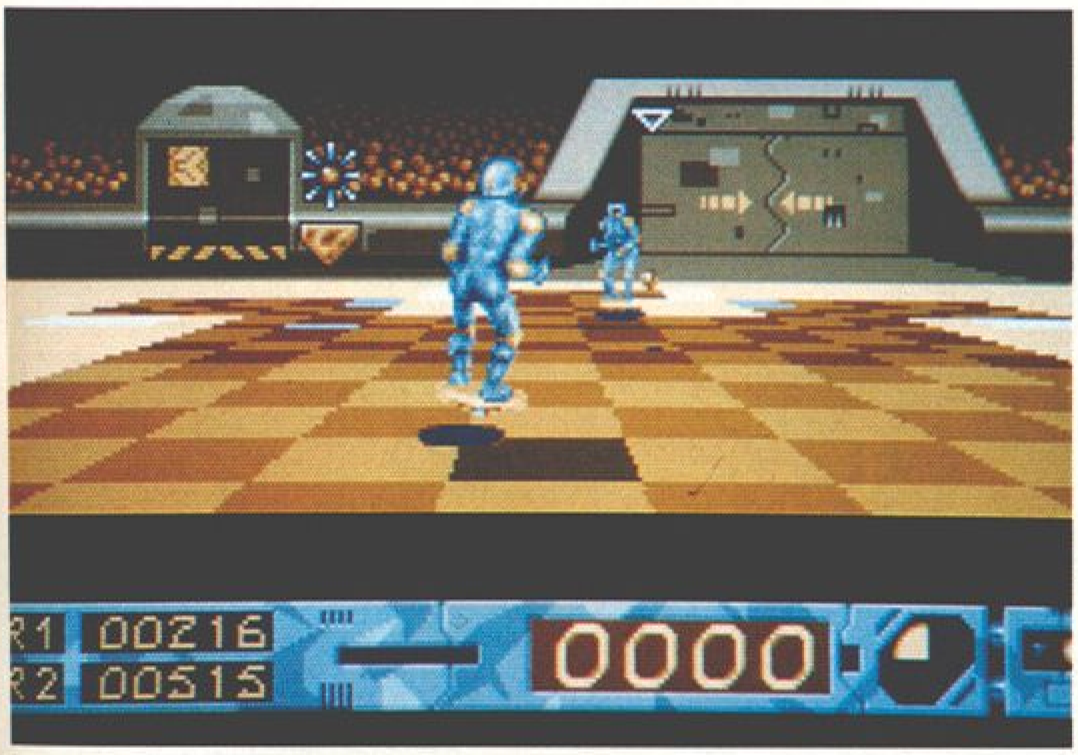
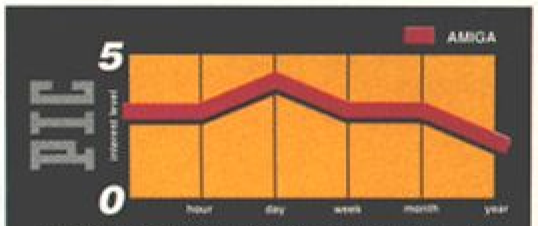
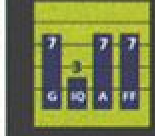




A couple of minutes exploring the options screens would be time well spent, since the length of rounds is vital to create the sort of game you're after. Roping in a mate for play will ensure longevity even after playing the batch of computerised opponents has become less gripping.

ACE RATING

780



AMIGA

Shame about the speed in two-player mode. Aside from this point, the machine is perfectly happy chucking the reasonable-sized sprites around, adding nice music and marrying the polygons and bitmap images extremely well.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£TBA	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£TBA	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBA	OUT NOW

STORMBALL

Cross basketball with tennis and put it on rollerskates. What do you get? MILLENIUM's *Stormball!*

A novel twist on the future-sports theme, *Stormball* combines the super-slick silvery graphics of *Speedball* with some basic-yet-nifty polygon routines to produce a fast-action novelty with some reasonable staying power.

The premise is acutely simple. Two players (one controlled by computer if you wish) skate around a set of increasingly complex checkerboard arenas, throwing a steel ball into scoring areas. Each player has an 'end' laden with squares of a different hue to the bulk of the pitch. When thrown by the opposing player, a ball passing over one of these hot squares will cause a scoring action.

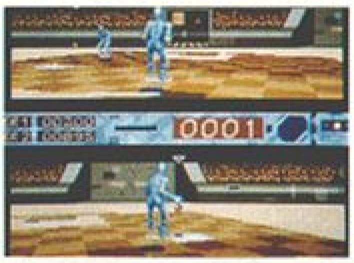
Players can prevent the opponent from scoring simply by getting in the way of the ball. Since the ball's velocity is pretty high, most matches are high-scoring affairs with plenty of room for last-second scores tipping the balance.

The players get around the course riding on little hover-pads. Which, it has to be said, are pretty mobile, although they need some getting used to.

Depending on the quality of your opponent, whether he be a ranked computer-controlled drone or human, will determine the nature of play. A little like badminton or tennis, the key is to continually keep the opponent running from one side of the pitch to the other, never giving them time to compose themselves.

Flexible time limits can be set on the length of each quarter, and aside from simply making each game more or less of an endurance test, altering the time limits will completely turn around the strategy of play.

In short games, by far the best policy is to shoot the ball almost the second you are in control of it, since you have a reasonable chance of scoring and, while the ball is heading away from you, there's no danger of an opponent scoring. Longer matches require more cunning, and smart players will adopt a campaign-like strategy, forcing their opponents to run around after the ball.



In two-player mode the screen splits horizontally down the middle. The game slows a little, but not really enough to ruin the fun.

If the ball lingers in one half for too long, the referee will call a time-out, and the game will reconvene from a ball-launch in the centre of the arena.

So, how does the whole thing hang together? Well, it's far from perfect; the ball is a similar colour to the background and is sometimes hard to spot. Everything slows down a bit when two players are involved in furious circular spins. And you haven't got quite got the control over the ball that you might.

HITTING THE HOT SPOT

There's a whole bunch of different tiles which can be used to the benefit of practised *Stormball* players. Here's a rundown:

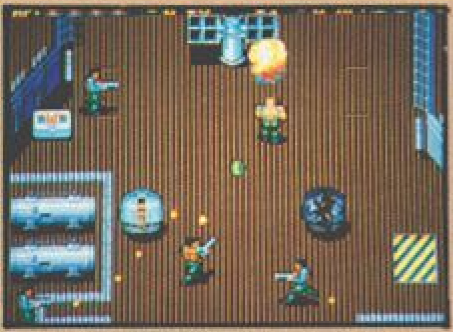
- **BARRIERS - Cause the ball to bounce back. Occasionally used to form walls and gates.**
- **HIGH-SCORE - Offer varying scores ranging from 10 to 300 points.**
- **MULTIPLIERS - Multiply your current accumulated score by two. A bit like a double word square in *Scrabble*.**
- **NULL SQUARES - If the ball is to pass over these squares, your accumulated score is cancelled. Boo.**
- **BREAKTHROUGH BLOCKS - Some areas on the course are rife with bonus points which can only be accessed by knocking these through.**
- **BOOSTER - A flashing tile speeds up the ball, occasionally causing the tiles to ricochet at a particular angle**

Aside from all this, however, *Stormball* is a pretty solid game. The marrying of sprites and polygon backgrounds works a whole lot better than you would expect. Racing around after the ball, while occasionally frustrating, is actually quite exciting and the spot-effects (crowd roars, plinks & bings as scores are thrown up, etc) are excellent.

A far from an essential purchase, but a good knockabout larf none-the-less, and an ideal testing ground for the programming techniques. Roll on the sequel.

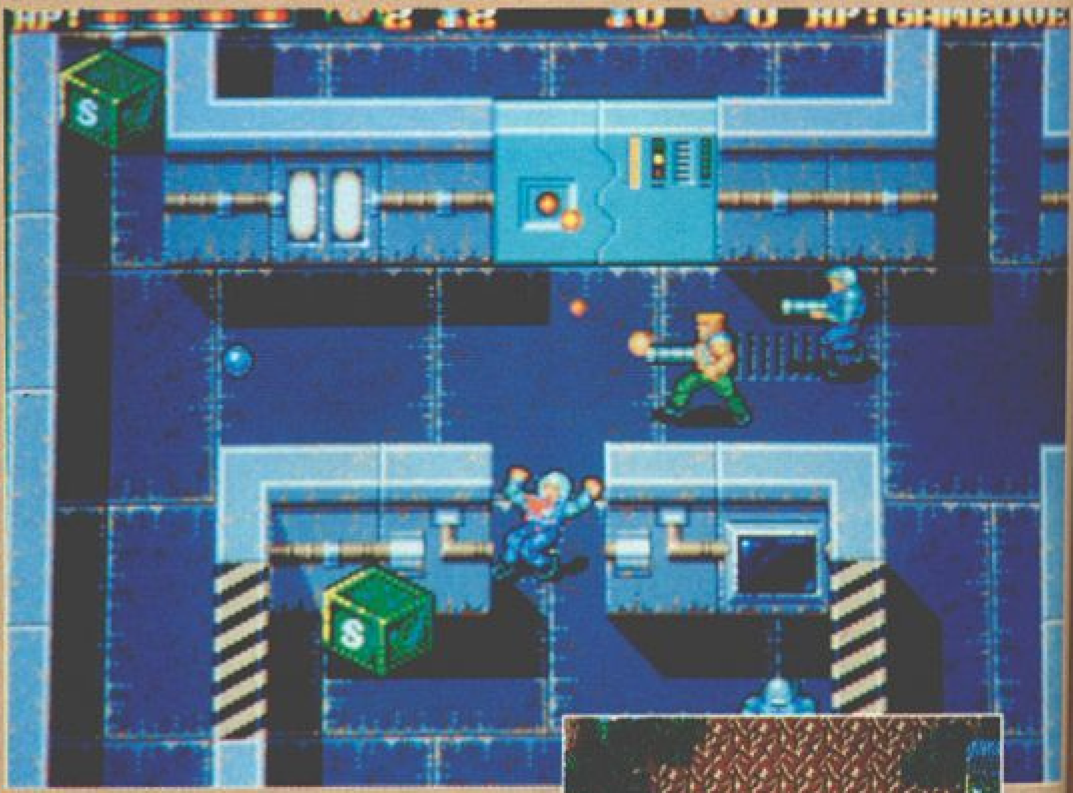
● **Jim Douglas**

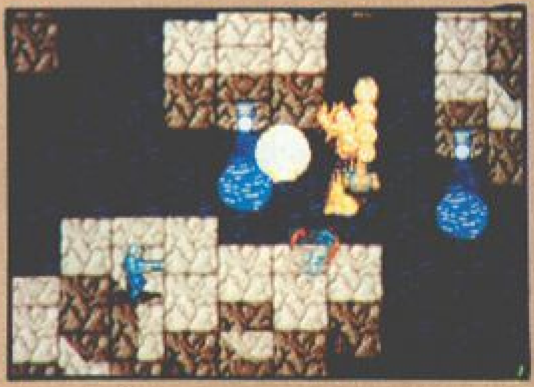
WARZONE



CORE DESIGN re-invent the *Ikari Warriors* wheel

It's 1999. Mysterious and powerful enemy forces have invaded countries around the World. You have been chosen, as the World's hardest hero, to lead an allied counter assault. But disaster strikes, and all but you and an equally tough friend are killed in a freak accident. The fate of the World lies in balance so, with the joystick firmly set to auto-fire, it's up to you two to kick the invaders' ugly butts back to oblivion.





As you wend your wicked way to a face-off with the hidden enemy base at the end of the eighth and final vertically-scrolling level, you'll find plenty of troopers to kill, hardware to blow up, weapons and power-ups to collect and hostages to rescue for a hefty bonus (although the amorally sadistic will get more pleasure from 'accidentally' shooting them).

The terrain ranges from swamps and jungles to sewers and warships and plays a key part in the game, as in some areas you can fire from behind cover without getting hit yourself. It's worth mentioning that instead of dying each time you get hit and losing any weapons you may have collected (annoying in any game), a little energy bar begins to fade. Having taken three hits you lose the weapon or a power-up. Fortunately you can replenish your energy before this happens by collecting various medi-packs scattered about in the undergrowth.

The bulk of the enemy consist of assault troops armed with slow firing machine guns, though others are equipped with more lethal weapons such as 'rapid-firing tripod guns' and 'grenade launchers' (with which they can fire over walls without you being able to fire back).

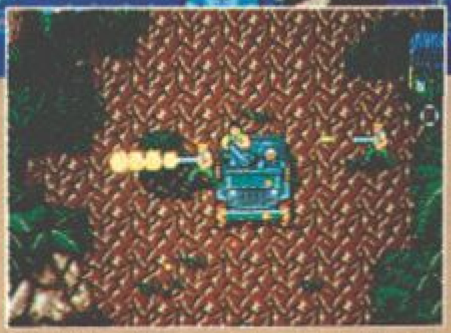
The obligatory end-of-level meanies include tanks, submarines, helicopters and others from the pages of *Boy's Own Bumper Book of Armoured Vehicles*. Although they all look suitably hard, some are far too easy to kill and won't satisfy your manic lust for mindless destruction at all.

The more astute reader will have already realised that *Warzone* bears more than a passing similarity to the aging classic *Ikari Warriors*, albeit with updated visuals and a host of new touches, such as soldiers who slowly home in on you and rolling logs that have to be dodged. The varied arsenal of weapons is the most welcome addition, making the game more fun to play.

Warzone's main strength is the ability to let another player join in which makes for the development of new tactics as one player 'cover's the other's back'. Mind you, as any two-player game veteran will know, teamwork goes out of the window when it comes to collecting weapons and power-ups.

Warzone wins no prizes for originality, but as a straightforward blast-'em cure for the summertime blues it's excellent.

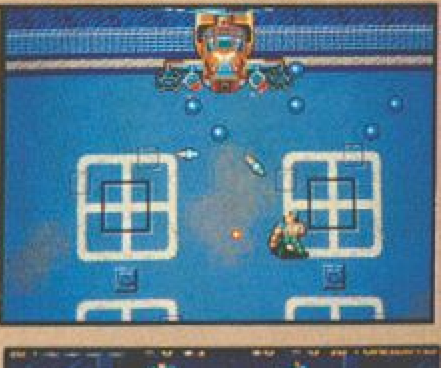
● **Khalid Howladar**

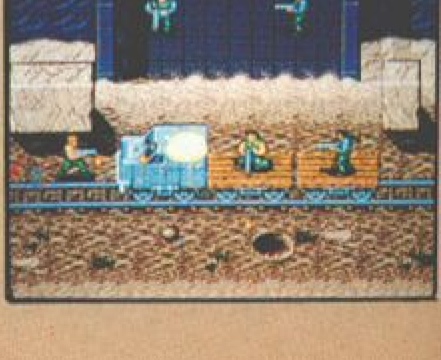


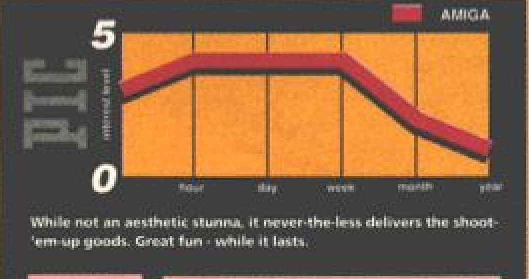
(Above): Everything seems to be going fine, when all of a sudden a jeep spewing bullets trundles into view. Stay frosty, man, stay frosty.

(Below): The end-of-level baddies are not overly exciting. One of the more intersting is this very tough attack chopper.

(Bottom): The enemy have blocked the way forward with a truck. Nothing to do but blow it to Hell!



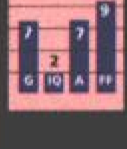




While not an aesthetic stunna, it never-the-less delivers the shoot-'em-up goods. Great fun - while it lasts.

ACE RATING

811

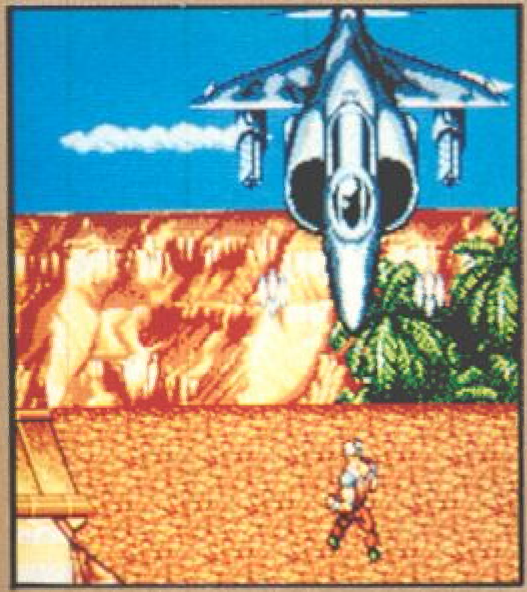


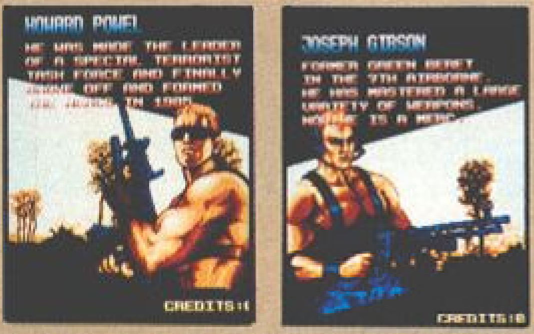
AMIGA

Technically *Warzone* does nothing to push forward the boundaries of Amiga games. The scenery's colourful, as are most of the sprites, but some of the end-of-level meanies look a bit bland and compared with some recent releases are distinctly unimpressive. Sound consists of the usual explosions and spot effects, but is more than adequate for this sort of game.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£20.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£20.99	OUT NOW





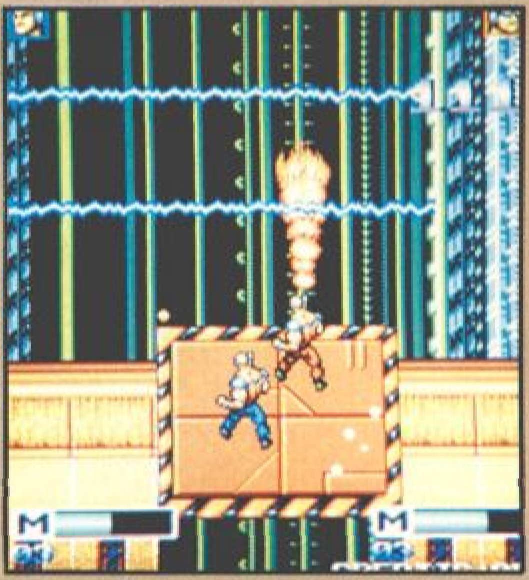
HOWARD POWEL
HE WAS MADE THE LEADER OF A SPECIAL TERRORIST TASK FORCE AND FINALLY [illegible] OFF AND FORMED [illegible] IN 1985
CREDITS:1

JOSEPH GIBSON
FORMER GREEN BERET IN THE 7TH AIRBORNE. HE HAS MASTERED A LARGE VARIETY OF WEAPONS. [illegible] IS A MERC.
CREDITS:0

Howard Powel and Joseph Gibson - the two hardest nuts in the Mercs! I feel sorry for the enemy already.

(*Left*): Harrier attack! You're plunged straight into the action with *Mercs* - you've barely started playing before your jumped by this jet.

(*Right*): *Mercs* has quite a lot of variety contained within its basic shoot-'em-up framework. Here, for example, you and your partner are stuck on a trolley slowly trundling up-screen - not much room to manouevre!



MERCS

US GOLD re-invent the... etc, etc

While on a peace mission in central Africa the President of the United States has been kidnapped by Zutula rebels. Unfortunately the US can't mount a much-needed rescue mission due to diplomatic reasons, and has chosen to hire some elite mercenaries. This, of course, is where you and a tag-along mate come in. As with *Warzone*, this feeble plot is merely an excuse for eight levels of frenetic kill-'em action.

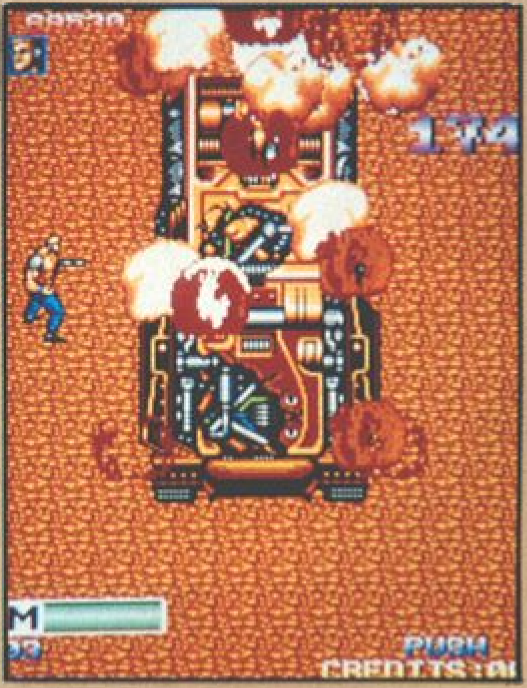
The biggest difference to *Warzone* is instantly noticeable on loading up - the play area, although narrow, scrolls horizontally as well as vertically and gives a greater feeling of movement and freedom. The action is also a lot more hectic, with soldiers piling in from all directions, each looking to get a promotion over your dead bodies.

Although largely identical in style to *Warzone*, *Mercs* does have a few features that give it a flavour all of its own. The ability to blast away huge chunks of the varied terrain is excellent - there's nothing quite more satisfying than reducing a screen-high gun turret to smoking rubble. Also great fun is the ability to commandeer idle vehicles and run over any troops foolish enough to get in your way - although these blasting boons only last a limited amount of time.

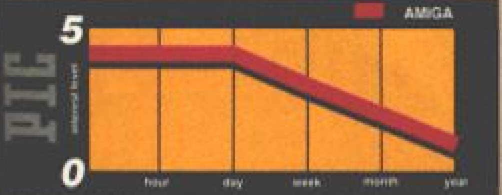
Alone you don't really notice the narrow play area, but with two players it's failings become all too apparent, as unless you both stick to the same area of the screen (which is contrary to usual advantages of two-players) you end up too close to the edge of the screen, giving you less time to react and not enough room to manouver.

All told, *Mercs* gives *Warzone* a good run for its money. *Mercs* is more more fun for one due to its higher level of action, but *Warzone* has the edge for two-fisted action.

● **Khalid Howladar**

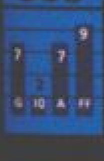


Boomshanka! Convulsing with the force of the explosions, the second end-of-level nasty is sent to the scrap yard.



Despite a slightly cramped play area, initial impressions are better than those of *Warzone*. Like all shoot-'em-ups, Mercs is great fun for a few weeks, but the interest wanes as you either complete it or reach a stage where you just can't get any further.

ACE RATING
805



AMIGA

Generally the game graphics are fine, with well-designed backgrounds and sprites, and the scrolling - although not up to Turrican II's standard - is pretty good. On the down side the animation is occasionally dire (two frames!) and some of the guardians are a little dull. Sound, like Warzone's, is functional rather than spectacular, though some nice jingles help things along.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£25.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£25.99	OUT NOW

LET BATTLE COMMENCE...

	WARZONE	MERCS
No. of players:	One or two. Best as two-player game.	One or two. Best as one-player game.
No. of levels:	Eight.	Eight.
Weapons:	Machine gun. Three-way fire. Rocket launcher. Grenade launcher. Homing missiles. Flame thrower.	Machine gun. Three-way fire. Wide shot. Flame thrower.
Power-up levels:	Three for each weapon.	Two for each weapon.
Guardians:	Some far too easy to kill.	Some far too hard to kill.

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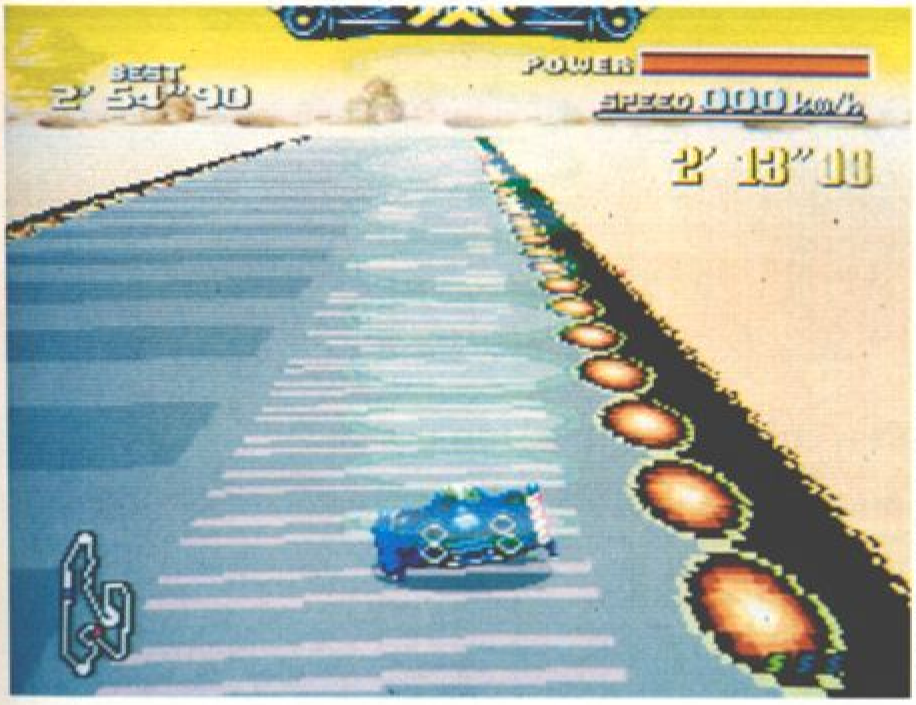
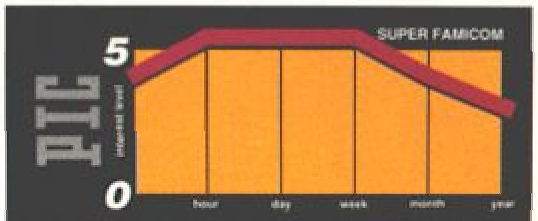


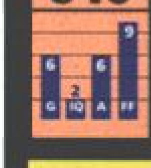
The action's so fast that there's no time for proper pit stops. Instead, the player has to drive along this striped area at the edge of the track, where a giant flying saucer swoops down and beams energy to the speeding craft.



Instant impressions for spectators are hardly white-hot. Once the control pad is in the player's grasp, however, it will prove increasingly difficult to dislodge. The craft-control learning curve is so steep, with dozens of trick moves afforded to the player and virtually infinite degrees of control available.

ACE RATING

840



SUPER FAMICOM

There's no doubt that on any other machine, *F-Zero* would be a pretty mediocre racing game. However, the graphical background trickery is used to genuine effect and is far more than a gimmick. Again, Nintendo's top playability comes to the fore.

RELEASE DETAILS

SUPER FAMICOM £34.99 OUT NOW
(Japanese Import)

F-ZERO

Pilot Wings was the first Famicom title to effectively use the background manipulation capabilities of the machine as an integral game element. *F-Zero* follows suit, but uses the technique in a genuinely exciting way.

Having selected your craft from a set of four, the set of tracks on which you wish to race and the skill level at which your opponents will drive, the race is on!

Presented with a frequently uninspiring start-line view with the course trailing off into the distance, its easy to find oneself wondering quite what the point of another 3D racing game is. Even with the screen update boosted and using the Famicom's processing power to the max, an against-the-clock race around a number of tracks is hardly going to set the world alight.

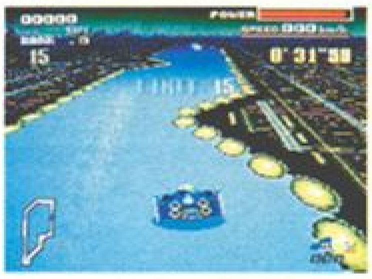
Indeed, even after a few races, spectators will lose interest and drift away, unable to comprehend what grips the player so completely.

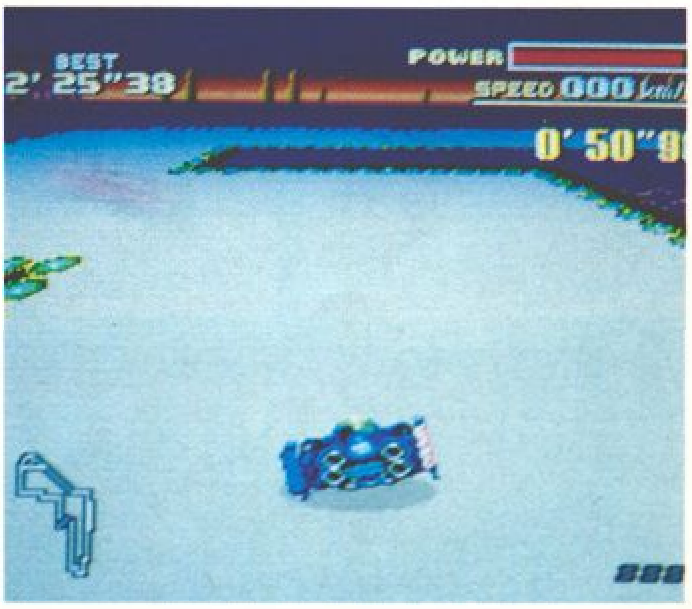
The appeal of the game is two-fold. The control over the craft is more precise than in any other race game. As well as the accelerate, brake, left and right controls, the two side-controllers on the Famicom's front edge act as banking switches, causing your craft to dig in its appropriate edge and hug the corners.

This degree of precision means that you can handle your craft like a cross between a hovercraft and a rally car, hanging it round corners with the tail sliding out, keeping the power on full and powersliding your way out of trouble.

And it's the speed of the craft and its amazing controlability which make the screen-handling so crucial. Once a turn has been initiated, the screen is automatically spun to provide an view of the track ahead. Now if you thought that was the way most race games worked, you'd be wrong. Until now, only polygon-driven games have offered a true panoramic view of the course, bitmapped graphics being unable to shift the background swiftly enough. As a result, in both sprite driven and polygon games, the course is plotted on-the-fly, offering at best a slightly peculiar, other-worldly feel.

Famicom owners still reeling from the Godawful *Big Run* can console themselves with a *real* racing game.





Since *F-Zero*'s courses are permanently on screen, you can for example see a bend right over on the far corner of the track, long before you reach it, and can set up your approach accordingly, as opposed to having to react second by second to the display plotted in front of you. It makes for a more fluid, though just as exhilarating experience.

The only drawback with the system is that everything in the background must be flat, ruling out the possibility of perspective-enhancing towers, buildings etc. However, the lack of these bonuses is more than outweighed by the speed of the system.

Depending on the skill setting opted for, the player will race against increasingly competent computer-controlled foes, who pilot the spare ships once the player has selected his favourite.

Since it's the feel of the game which makes it so good, even having read the review and studied the screenshots, it's easy to adopt a shrug-shoulders attitude to *F-Zero*. Unfortunately, it genuinely is one of those games that has to be experienced.

● **Jim Douglas**

BONANZ

It's daylight robbery! SEGA blag itself a coin-op conversion

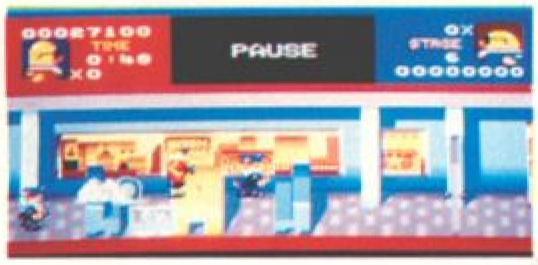
The *Bonanza Bros* have been doing no small trade in the arcades around the country, and while it boasts none of the technical gimmickery of recent coin-swallowers like *R360* or *Mad Dog McRee*, its peculiar graphic style and innovative angle on the team-up theme have made a big hit with Joe Public.

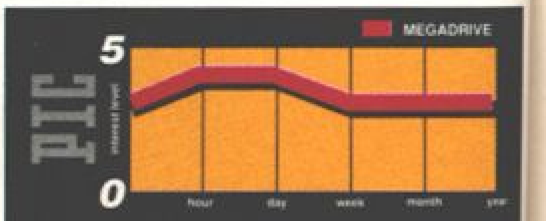
So it's a far from unappealing discovery that Bonanza Bros is already available on import for the Megadrive.

The Bonanza Bros are two slaphead crooks who spend their lives comedically burgling increasingly complex and heavily guarded buildings throughout Anytown, USA. With a reward already on the brothers' heads, the police and guards throughout the game adopt a shoot-first policy, making every turn, every doorway and every stairwell a potential location for disaster.

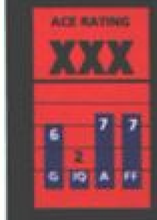
The point, quite clearly, is to relieve as many buildings of their valuable contents as possible, avoiding leaden death along the way.

Playing with a friend if you so desire, you enter the building and plan your route to the goodies. All salient features - your whereabouts, the exit and the valuables - are marked on a schematic of the building situated in the centre of the screen. Without a doubt, it's more fun with two, since each player can head off into different areas of the game (still keeping an eye on the other's progress thanks to the split screen and coming to their aid if necessary) to collect the goodies before meeting up at the exit point.





Not the most immediately absorbing of games - mainly because the graphics style is a little basic. Still once you get going and the playability starts to grip, the graphics tend to take a bit of a sub-conscious backseat to the great fun on offer - especially when a fellow con along!

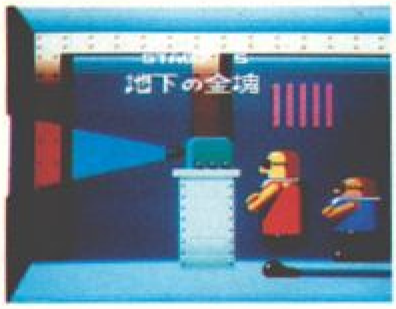


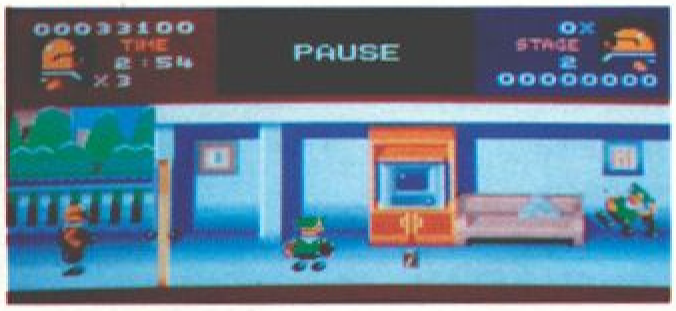
MEGADRIVE

Some stylish although not necessarily beautiful graphics mean than *Bonanza Bros* is an interesting title to play. The movement of the central characters is a bit fidgety, but on the whole it's a fine game, especially with two players.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE	£34.99	OUT NOW



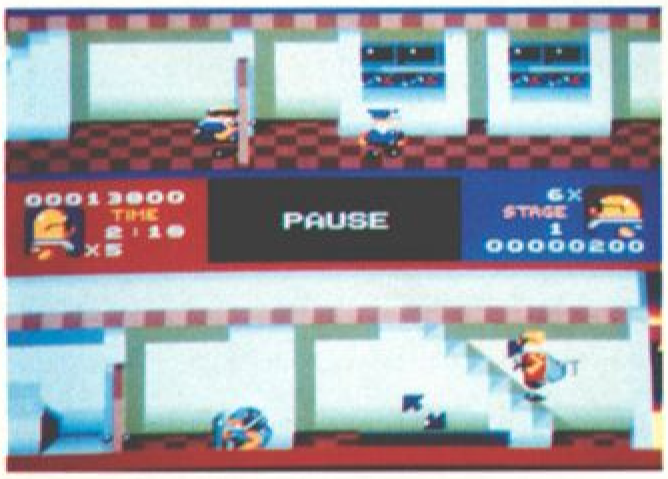


(*Above*): The bald boys learn of their next mission through a private picture-show, giving an indication of what they need to collect and the nature of the terrain and the bad guys they will face.

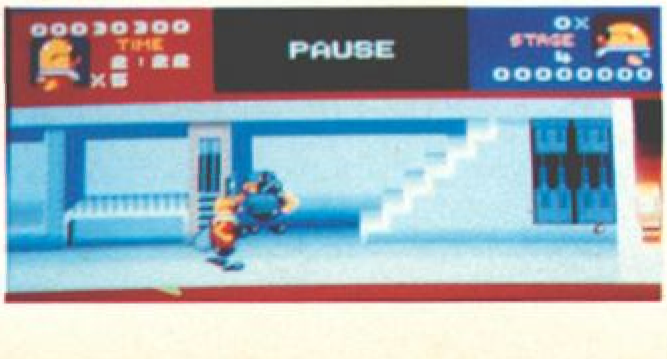
(*Above right*): A second player can dive in at any time, simply by hitting start on their controller. However, there's nothing more frustrating than your 'partner' using up all your credits in order to continue their game.

(*Below*): One of our heroes is beset by a vicious yapping guard dog! A well-placed shot will see him off with a heart-rendingly pitiful yelp!

(*Above*): These larceny-minded lads believe in good planning. During the pre-blag film show they get information on the location to be hit and the type of items to be found inside.

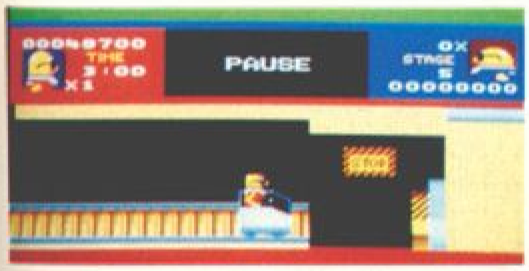


Stair-wells are common places to get stuck. The cops frequently lie in wait around here!



These armoured guards are the toughest nuts to crack. Shooting at them head-on will do no good at all.
Somehow you've either got to sneak
past them or shoot 'em in the back - villain!

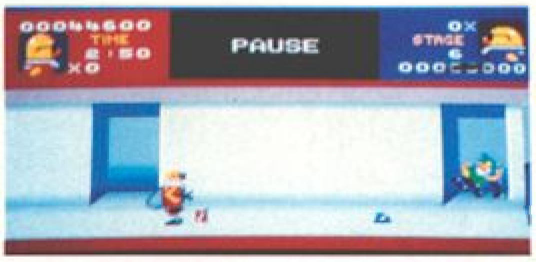
ZA BROS



Movement through the levels is restricted on a number of counts. Obstacles force the players to move through sections in a particular way, thus bottlenecking unwary robbers into prime ambush territory. Police, guards and odd robotic dogs will attack the robbers, forcing some entertaining shoot-out scenarios.

The speed of the bullets fired by both player and computerised opponent is such that either combatant can dodge or jump over at least one incoming shot. Skillful players will learn to lure their victims out from behind the packing cases, filing cabinets, fruit machines and parked cars which can be used as cover, and into an oncoming bullet.

Taking a shot from an opponent, whether it be a bullet or a blow from a nightstick, is bad news. Valuable time is lost, and all the booty carried by the wounded player is dropped onto the floor. Although the player is invincible after a brief period of immobility, the action can occasionally become so frenetic, with guards surrounding the downed robber, hitting him with fresh blows the moment he has recovered, that a policy of running away may well be best. You can return at a later date to collect lost goods or, if you're making a campaign out of the game rather than attempting to get individual high-scores, leave it for your accomplice to collect while you press on.



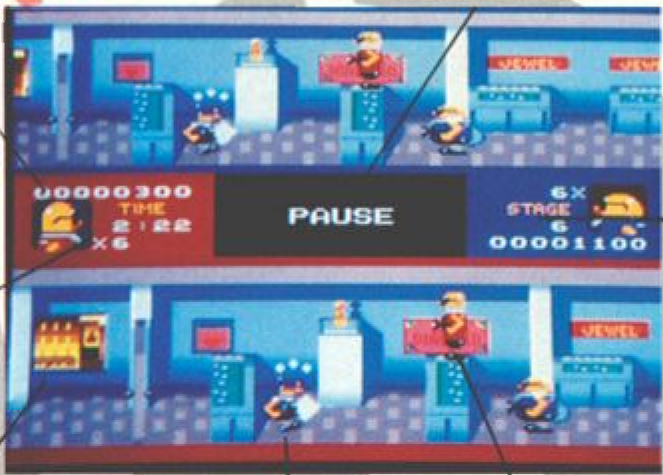
Despite some serious slowing down when a bunch of objects is on the screen, *Bonanza Bros'* visuals are reminiscient of the coin-op. I steer clear of the term 'impressive', because to be honest, this kind of kiddy-style-but-actually-rather-attractive look only works effectively when you've got a fantastic graphics chip. On the Megadrive, the style simply looks a bit basic.

The levels don't really pose much of a challenge until you reach double figures, and the longevity of the title is undoubtedly in question. However, for an above average blast, it's well worth a look.

● **Jim Douglas**

WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

Although it says 'PAUSED' at the moment, normally this window contains a sketch map of the level, with the position of the Bros and the loot clearly indicated.



This indicates the amount of time the Bros have to grab the loot and get out. Should the timer fall to zero then they'll miss the boat - or, rather, air ballon.

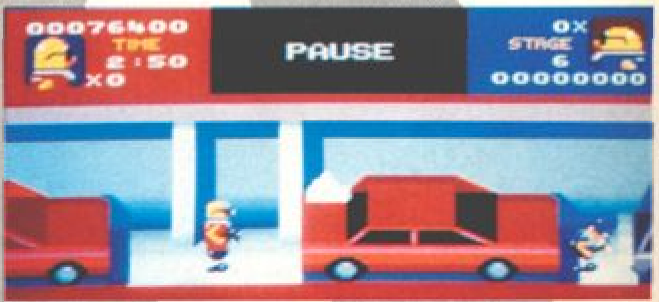
A strong shoulder and a tap of the B button will usually swing doors wide open - any guards or dogs caught napping will be flung against the walls and temporarily dazed.

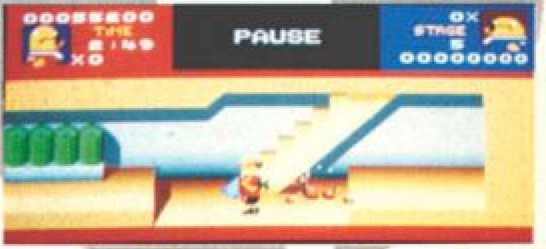
This indicates the number of lives each player has remaining.

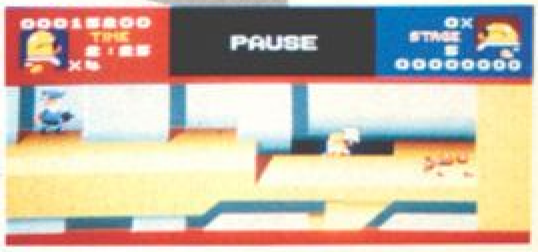
Each player has their own 'game window'. If you want you can split up completely!

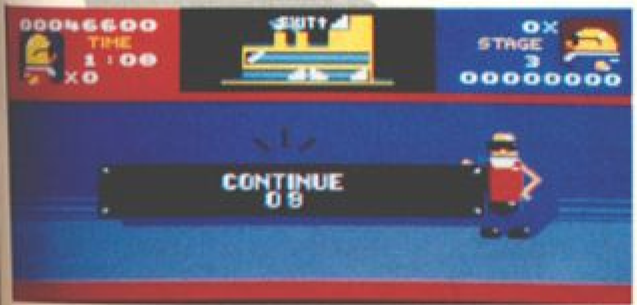
A typical shoot-first/ask-questions-later guard. Try not to get caught in the crossfire!

The Bros can jump onto shelves and cupboards and even move in and out of the scenery - vital for fooling some of the tougher law-keepers.





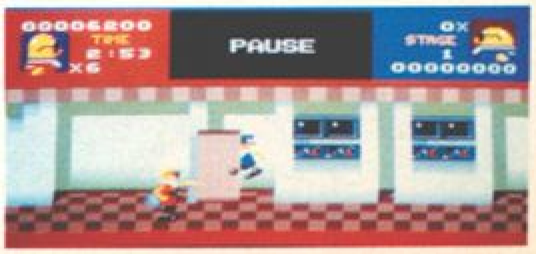




(*Above right*): The graphic style in *Bonanza Bros* is peculiar, and kind of endearing, looking ever-so-simple, but actully featuring some complex tricks.

(*Right*): However, even allowing for the coin-ops excellent graphic capabilities, it's definitely an acquired taste.

(*Left*): Some Megadrive owners may resent playing a title which could so easily be mistaken for a Master system title.



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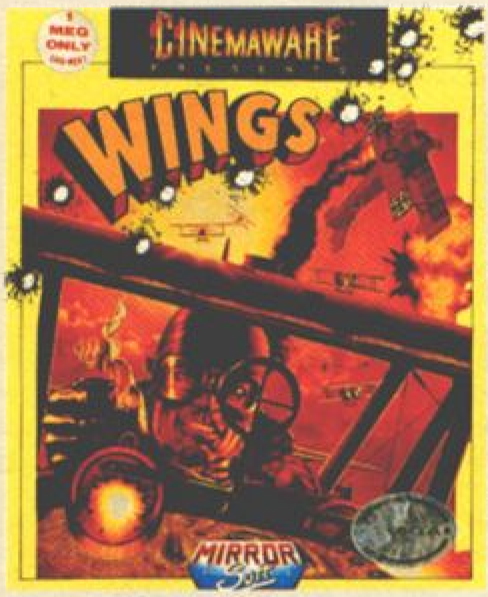
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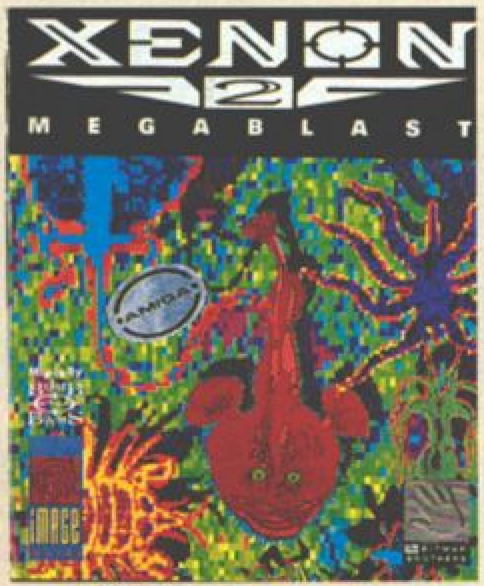
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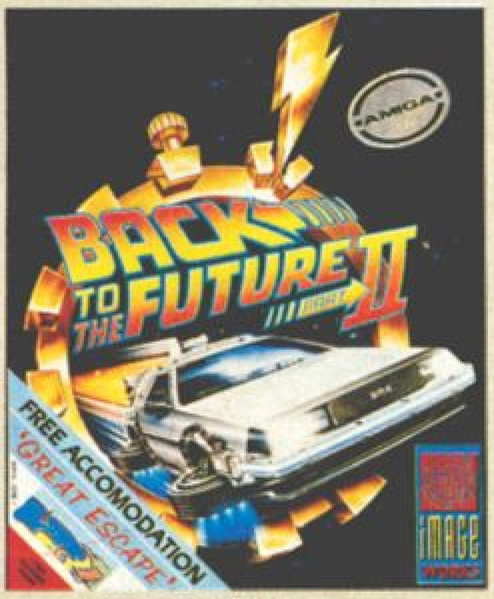
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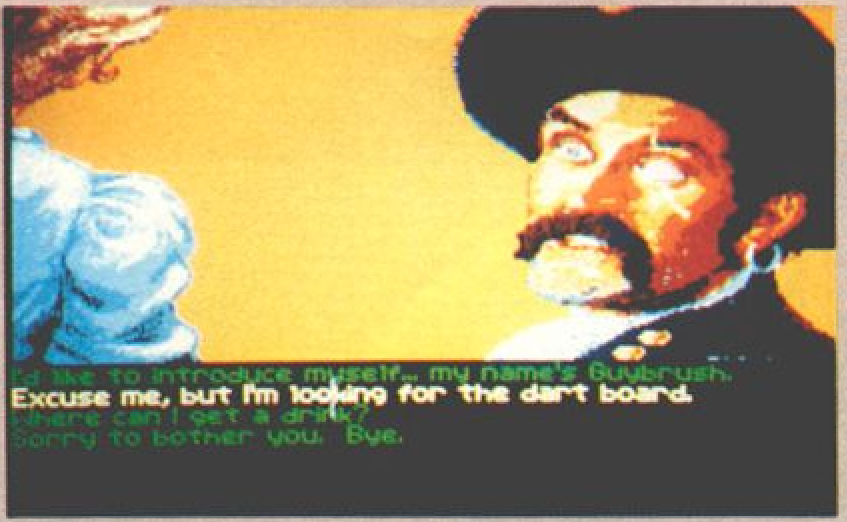
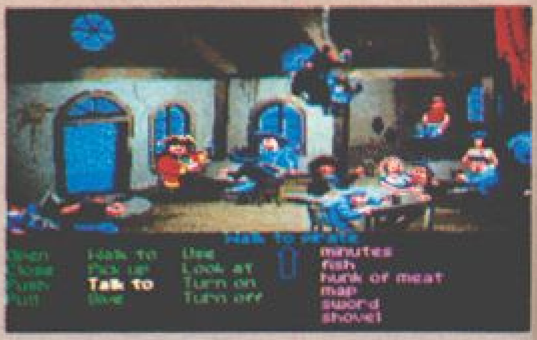
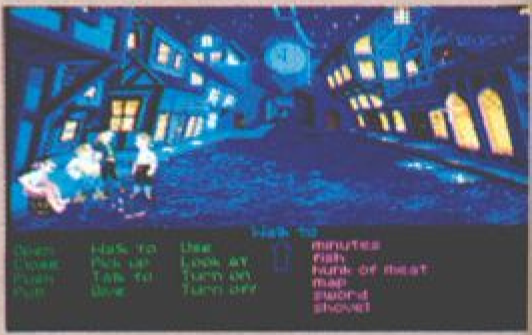


I'd like to introduce myself... my name's Guybrush.
Excuse me, but I'm looking for the dart board.
Where can I get a drink?
Sorry to bother you. Bye.

(Left) Close-up of a character in the Scumm Bar. Although not fully animated, his features change at critical points of the conversation and his looks tell you something about his characteristics. Dare you ask this man about his dodgy eye?


Walk to pirate
Open
Close
Push
Pull
Walk to
Pick up
Talk to
Give
Use
Look at
Turn on
Turn off
minutes
fish
hunk of meat
map
sword
shovel

(Above right) This scene really comes alive with the help of a delightful soundtrack. Not only is there a dog in the corner (yet another nice touch of detail) but you can bark along with him too...


Walk to
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Look at
Turn on
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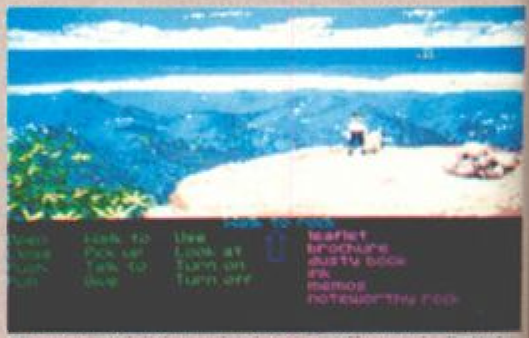
(Right) During dialogue, these characters establish relationships with each other, and impart information – a far cry from earlier adventure personnel who had little to offer.


Walk to rock
Open
Close
Push
Pull
Walk to
Pick up
Talk to
Give
Use
Look at
Turn on
Turn off
leaflet
brochure
dusty book
ink
memos
noteworthy rock

The amount of dialogue the characters offer may be limited, but the quality is far superior!

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

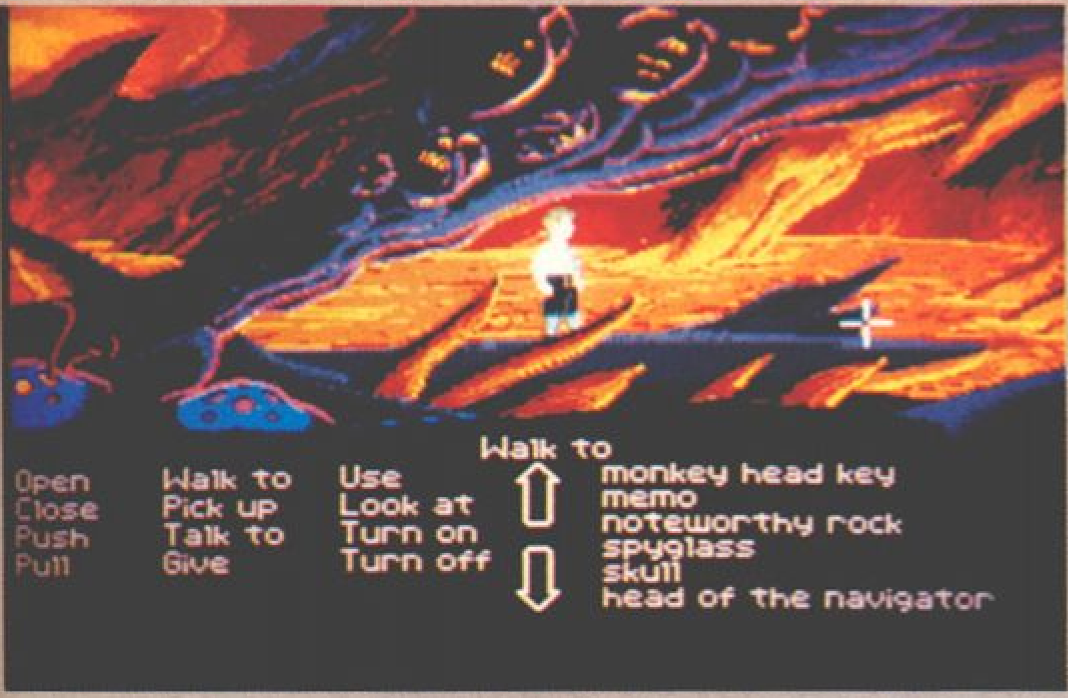
LUCASFILM/US GOLD's pirate fantasy won Best Game Play at the Computer Game Developers Conference in San José. Find out why as the company release new versions and announce a sequel...

Interactive movies, aren'tcha just sick of 'em?! They don't move, they hardly even interact, and they're for those people who used to type GO NORTH, HIT TROLL, and that sort of thing. Yeukk.

In the face of this sort of irrational bias, most software companies have stuck to the straight and narrow path of arcade, RPG, and simulation software. It's food for thought, however, when America's largest software house (Sierra) subsists almost entirely on animated graphic adventures (AGAs for short, OK?), a fact that Lucasfilm must have chewed over a few years back before spitting out their own string of AGAs, beginning with *Maniac Mansion* and *Zak McKracken*. Those games, just in case you've never heard of them, sold by the shopfull.

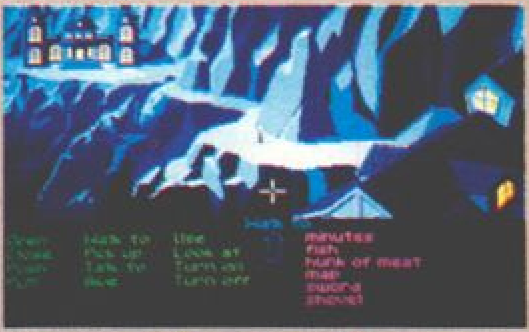
The latest in the Lucasfilm series, *The Secret of Monkey Island*, can't be doing too badly either. Recently released for ST and Amiga, as well as in a new 256-colour VGA PC version, this game's a powerful pointer to the advances made in AGA-tech since Sierra's *Kings Quest* first jerked across a CGA screen. If you're already a fan of this genre, you won't need an introduction, but if you're a stranger to the world of AGAs, what's going on?

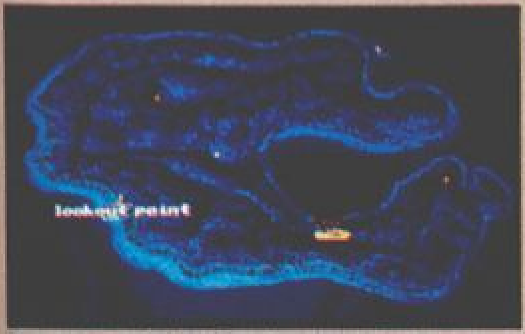
First, these games are getting much, much bigger. In the old days, you'd struggle around maybe twenty or thirty screens, collecting objects using a very tedious type-in parser, and use the objects in the appropriate location and the required manner. Nowadays, us 16-bit owners have been painfully trained to pay more for our software, while at the same time the higher capacity disk formats now available mean that between £25 and £30 can buy us a whole heap of graphics and sound data. *The Secret of Monkey Island* is NOT the stuff of a morning's entertainment. Even a dedicated gamer is going to take more than a weekend to polish this one off, and most average players will be at it for many, many sessions ('average playing time', says the blurb, of '30 hours').



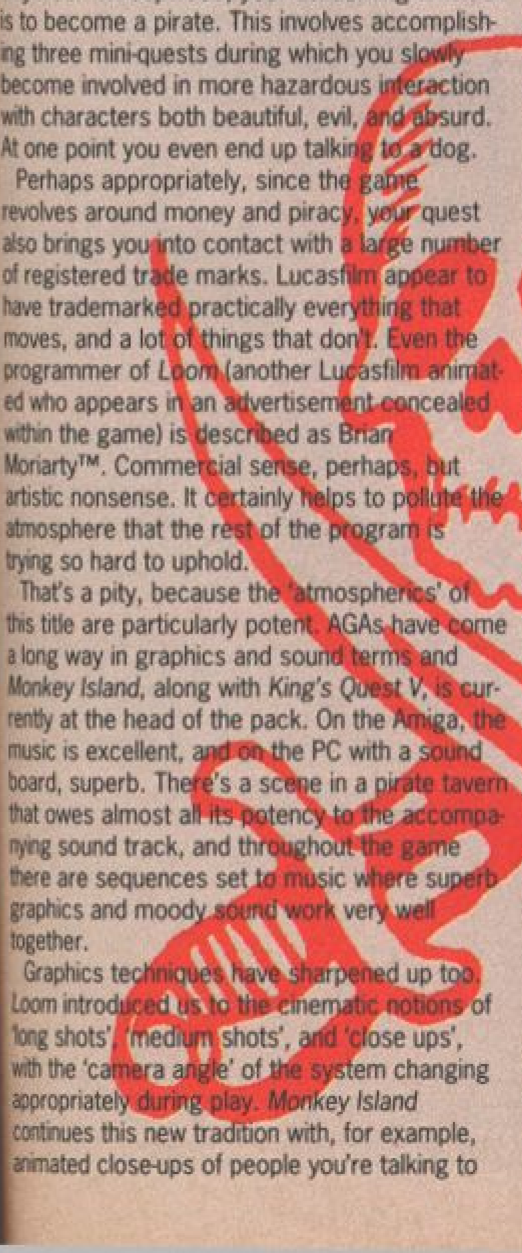
(Left) A trip to Hell is just one of the stops during the game, which takes you through a richly diverse series of locations ranging from a circus top to a voodoo parlour

(Below) Long shots, as used in *Loom*, appear in *Monkey Island* as well and in some cases feature a smooth scaling process as your character approaches. In *Loom*, most of these changes of scale were accompanied by simple scale switching as your character moved behind objects. Here, he changes dynamically while still in view.





Pretty and functional, the island at night is shown as a map and clicking on any location takes you straight there



Monkey Island, for example, contains several discrete sub-plots, ranging from simple quests (well, not all that simple) to do with treasure seeking and treasure stealing to a grand objective involving a a dead Pirate from Hell. As Guybrush Threepwood, your consuming ambition is to become a pirate. This involves accomplishing three mini-quests during which you slowly become involved in more hazardous interaction with characters both beautiful, evil, and absurd. At one point you even end up talking to a dog.

Perhaps appropriately, since the game revolves around money and piracy, your quest also brings you into contact with a large number of registered trade marks. Lucasfilm appear to have trademarked practically everything that moves, and a lot of things that don't. Even the programmer of *Loom* (another Lucasfilm animated who appears in an advertisement concealed within the game) is described as Brian Moriarty™. Commercial sense, perhaps, but artistic nonsense. It certainly helps to pollute the atmosphere that the rest of the program is trying so hard to uphold.

That's a pity, because the 'atmospherics' of this title are particularly potent. AGAs have come a long way in graphics and sound terms and *Monkey Island*, along with *King's Quest V*, is currently at the head of the pack. On the Amiga, the music is excellent, and on the PC with a sound board, superb. There's a scene in a pirate tavern that owes almost all its potency to the accompanying sound track, and throughout the game there are sequences set to music where superb graphics and moody sound work very well together.

Graphics techniques have sharpened up too. Loom introduced us to the cinematic notions of 'long shots', 'medium shots', and 'close ups', with the 'camera angle' of the system changing appropriately during play. *Monkey Island* continues this new tradition with, for example, animated close-ups of people you're talking to and long shots of the landscape as you disappear along the road to fame and fortune. The panning, however, is still more scroll than pan – and the push scrolling system on the Amiga is a trifle jerky (better on the PC).

AGAs have also come a long way in terms of user interface. While Sierra have abandoned typing altogether with their point and click interface, Lucasfilm have retained an on-screen verb menu but polished up the execution. *Monkey Island* is extremely easy to play and, by making logical use of both left and right mousebuttons (together with single key equivalents for all commands), the programmers have removed any objections you could have to the use of an English language interface. As you move the pointer over the screen, object names drop onto the command line and a selection of two verbs is always available. The game design does the rest, so you very rarely need to access the menu to select a specific verb for a specific object or person – most of the time it's there, waiting for a single click to execute.

But there's more to *Monkey Island* than improved interface and presentation – the story structure of these games has also improved enormously and, for my money, that's what's worth paying for. First, although characters are still of the 'visit this location and there you'll find me type', their dialogue, physical characteristics, and role in the plot makes them a lot more interesting than their predecessors. There must be a script editor behind this game, because there's a definite sense of relationship between characters and the player which – as any pro will tell you – is what makes the difference between good movie and bankruptcy.

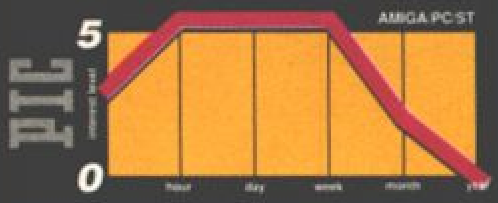
Which brings us back to movies. Lucasfilm have never (unlike some) attempted to brand their games as 'interactive movies' because, as Noah Falstein once told us, 'we know enough about real movie making to appreciate how far away we are from it'. However, these games are beginning to approach the degree of involvement and identification that films offer their audiences and their continued success suggests that it's now only a matter of time before the AGA really takes off. The increased capacity of CD will certainly help. So will more powerful processors because, if there's any criticism to be made here, it's that after scrolling, disk loading (occasionally painfully frequent if you haven't got a hard disk) and menu selection, the playing process is still too slow. That's said, this is worth a trip to the Caribbean for...

● **Steve Cooke**

MONKEY ISLAND II

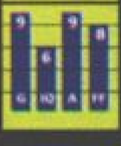
Boy, those trade marks must be paying off. No sooner have we got the later versions of *MI*, than along comes *MI2*, due out in October for the PC with other 16-bit formats to follow.

Featuring scanned art and 256-colour piccies, the sequel revolves around a revenge match between Threepwood™ and the evil LeChuck™. Like *MI1*, it will also be designed by SCUMM programmer Ron Gilbert, leading us to expect that Ron will soone be promoted to Ron™, if he hasn't been already. Expect some screenshots of the new game in next month's ACE report from Chicago CES.



Monkey Island grabs you straightaway with a combination of pretty pics and superb sound. The first few puzzles are relatively easy, but as you begin to explore further afield your appetite for adventure is suitable whetted. As with all games of this genre, once you've cracked it, you're unlikely to come back for more.

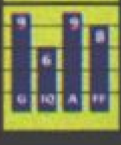
ACE RATING
922



AMIGA

Really benefits from a hard disk: the game operates somewhat slowly, possibly due to the overheads of the SCUMM authoring system that was used for this game (and Loom). Sound is superb, however, and the graphics are excellent by most games' standards, though sometimes the detail of the image loses out to the limited resolution of the display. A quality Amiga animated graphics adventure, without a doubt.

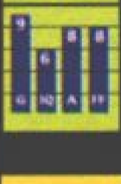
ACE RATING
918



ST

Again, a mightily fine program. Excellent graphics and surprisingly good sound add to the atmosphere, making Monkey Island a supremely enjoyable title. Lots of planning and storyboarding yields good results, offering a narrative style which others could well learn from.

ACE RATING
915



IBM PC

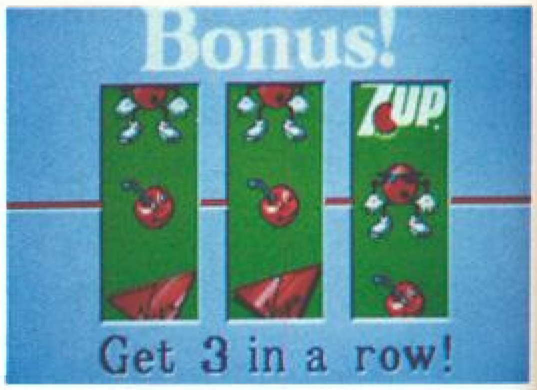
You really need a powerful VGA machine to get the best out of this, but even EGA owners will appreciate the game. What a pity that soundboard owners only (AdLib and SoundBlaster) will get the quality sound tracks, which add a great deal to the atmosphere of many locations. The PC version seems a bit nippier than the Amiga, but – although you can't argue with 256 colours – actual picture detail isn't quite as good as the Amiga, especially on EGA. Hard disk highly recommended.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£25.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£25.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW

SPOT

Break out the Biactol! Will you find VIRGIN's boardgame catching?



Boardgames don't come much simpler than *Spot*. Starting with one counter on a seven by seven square board, players take it in turns to either 'expand' by placing another counter adjacent to one of theirs already on the board, or 'jump' a counter two squares in any direction. Any neighbouring enemy counters are then changed to the player's colour. Play continues until one player remains or the board is completely covered, in which case the player with the most counters wins.

Ho-hum, you may think, another Othello variant. And yes, you're completely correct, but *Spot* does have a couple of novel features that lift it above the ordinary. Two to four players can take part, with all, some or none of them controlled by computer. Apart from the basic board there are many other more elaborate designs, featuring blank squares that pieces can't land on, adding more strategic problems to play.

More important, from the get-'em-in/bums-on-seats point of view, is *Spot* himself. This shades-'n'-trainers wearing dude is the character used Stateside to advertise the 7-Up soft drink, and acts as the hi-NRG MC for the proceedings. The amusing and superbly animated antics of *Spot* and his accomplices add a whole new dimension of cutesy fun to the game.

While *Spot* is never going to set the gaming world alight, it's a restful antidote to sims and strategy games. Having Spots before the eyes has never been so much fun.

● **David Upchurch**

TOP SPOTS

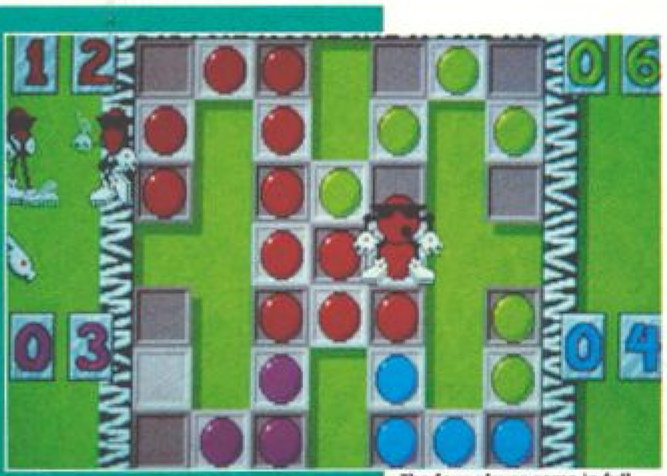
MADONNA
Madonna's famous mole has probably been photographed more times than any other melanoma in history. And sitting in that prime position on the Saucy One's top lip, just think of the stories it could tell, eh?

CHESNEY HAWKES
Nice try, Ches, but you just don't cut it as a Madonna wannabe. You can't even get your blemish in the right position! Give up now.

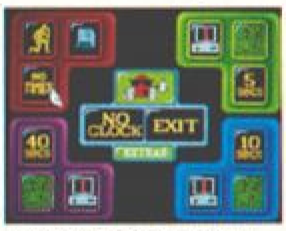
SPOTTY DOG
Undoubted star of BBC 1's 'The Woodentops', Spotty Dog (sic) was apparently the spottiest spotty dog you ever did see. Perhaps that explains the bizarre locked-joints way he used to walk?

ANYONE ON 'GRANGE HILL'
Where do they get 'em from? Each of these precocious stage school stars seems to have more eruptions than Krakatoa. Perhaps they all eat greasy food and chocolate so that they can 'get in character'? Now that's dedication to method acting for you.

OLIVER CROMWELL
Now it can be told! The reason Olly the Wart wanted Charles the First beheaded had nothing to do with a quest for democracy - Olly was simply jealous of Char's superior complexion. Sad man.

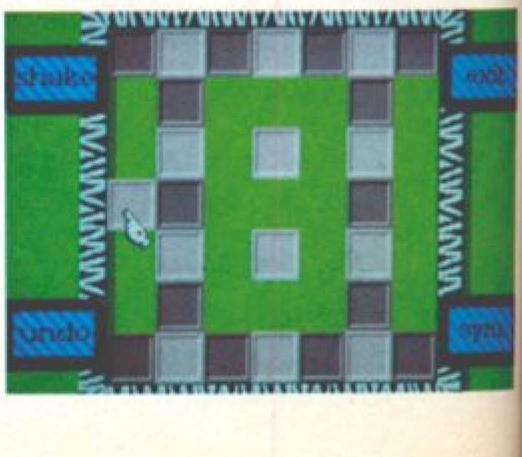


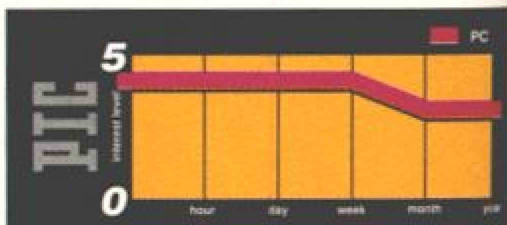
The four-player game in full swing. Click on a counter and up pops Spot, ready and eager to go. Click elsewhere, and he'll jump, pole vault, roller skate or even break dance into position!



(*Above*): This editor lets you design boards - simply click on a square to fill or remove it. But the game comes complete with a wide range of arenas already, so it's unlikely you'll need to use this facility for quite a while.

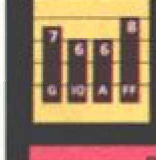
(*Right*): The comprehensive options allow you to make the players either human or computer controlled, change control (to keyboard, mouse or joystick), set time limits on moves and even turn lovable ol' Spots animation on or - sob! - off.





Easy-to-learn game rules and Spot's appealing animation draw you in and will keep you coming back from time to time. But it's unlikely that you'll ever be hooked enough to find yourself playing into the wee small hours.

ACE RATING
800



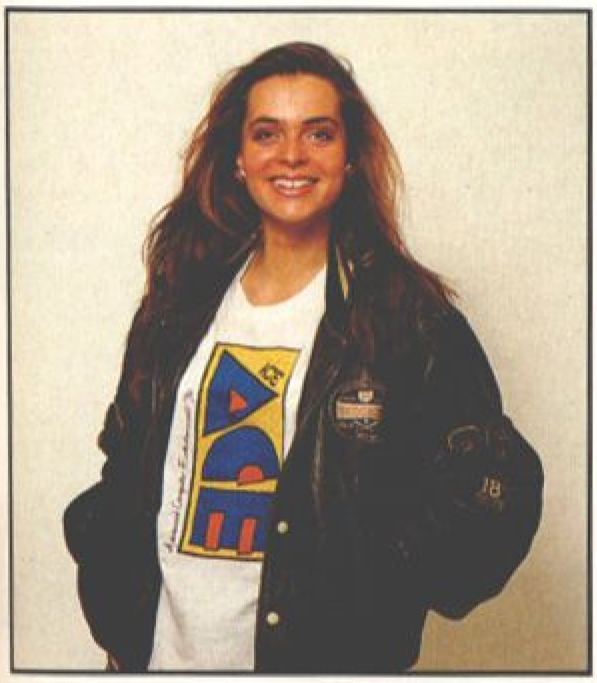
IBM PC

The perfect game to have on hard drive and to boot up after a hard day's spreadsheeting: simple to learn, amusing to watch and enjoyable to play. The gamer's equivalent of a quiet drink after work.

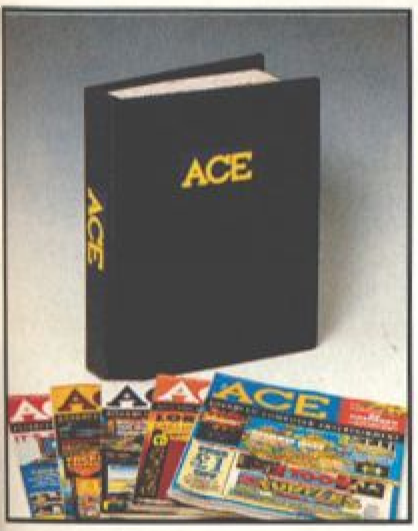
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£TBA	Late June
ATARI ST	£TBA	July
IBM PC	£TBA	Late June

ACE MERCHANDISE OFFER



There can surely be nothing more sexy and fashionable than the ACE t-shirt. This latest item in the *Ace Clothing Collection* is what every self respecting computing genius will be wearing this season. The eye catching ensemble has been exclusively designed by ACE's own art editor, Jim "Gaultier" Willis, for the lover of fine things and the reader with good taste. The t-shirt is available in sizes small, medium and extra large and can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of £5.99



▲ **ACE Binder A**

There is no better way of storing your copies of this, the world's finest computer entertainment magazine, than in an ACE binder. The binders are available in two designs - so as to satisfy even the most stalwart supporter of style and quality - and can be yours for the embarrassingly inexpensive price of £5.99

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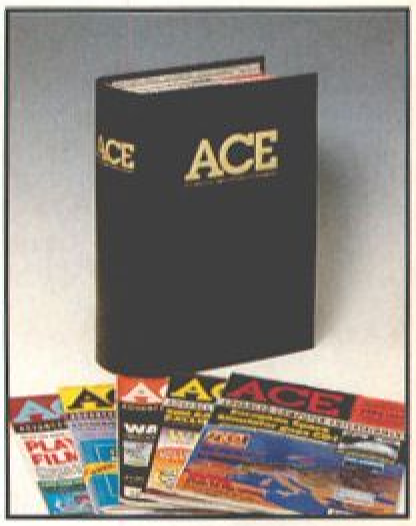

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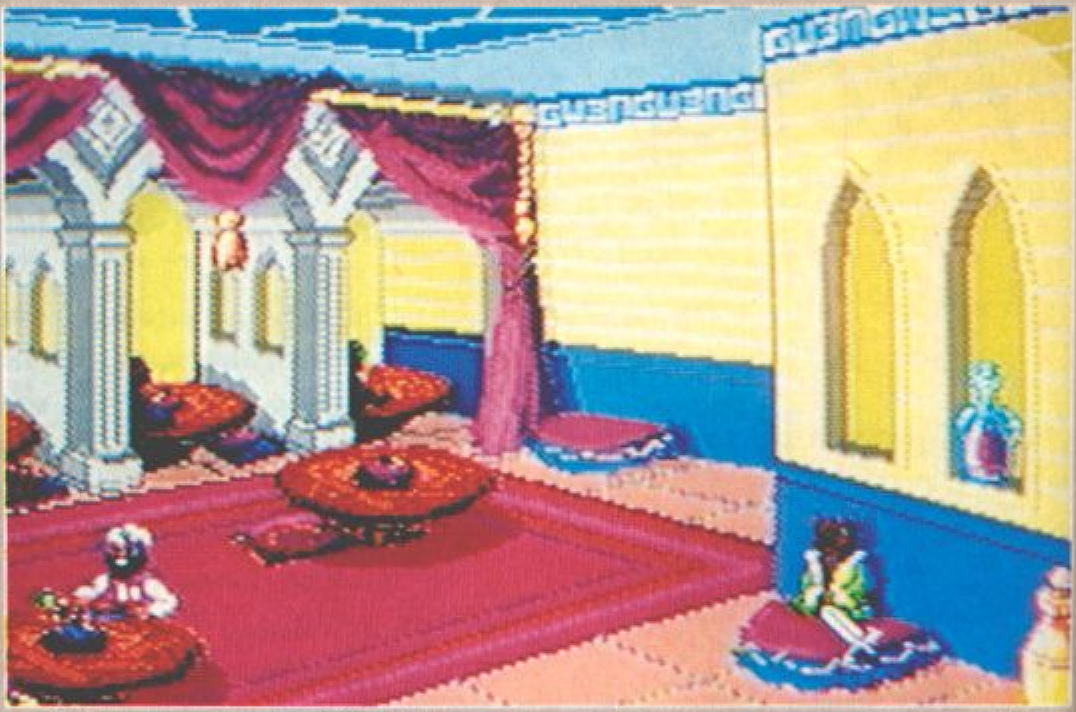


Any game which is supplied on eight disks must be pretty special; unfortunately with *Quest for Glory II: Trial By Fire*, the animated fantasy role-playing game, you get the feeling that the whole thing could have been squeezed onto two disks without much loss.

For a start, the graphics just aren't too impressive; low-res and coloured with the subtlety of a four-year-old's fingerpainting, they don't do much to draw you into the exotic world of the mysterious East. The music, too, grates, but possibly the worst aspect of the game is its sense of humour; Arabian market stallholders given Groucho Marx dialogue? A character called Stefan von Speilburg? Only the Americans could find it funny.

TRIAL by Fire

Adventuring through the Arabian Nights in the sequel to *So You Want to Be A Hero*

If, though, you enjoyed the prequel, *So You Want To Be A Hero*, presumably you'll be ready for all this, and will be eager to continue the adventures of the hero you originally created. The intro routines for *Trial By Fire* allow you to select a Thief, Fighter or Wizard as your hero, allocate skill points for characteristics such as strength, intelligence, luck, honour and vitality, and enter the game; or you can load character data from the previous game.

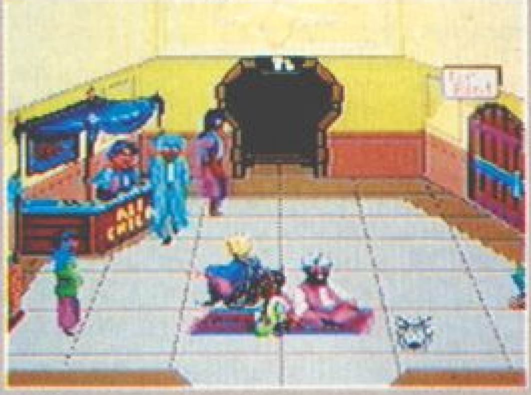
The aim is to explore the land of Shapeir and save its sister land Raseir from an evil spirit. To give you some background, the package includes a game manual, guide to adventuring, and a colourful map of the land of Shapeir.

The game screen consists of a main graphic area with pull-down menus allowing selection of options such as game save/restore, sound on/off, animation speed, and charater commands like Cast Spell, Fight, Escape, Talk and Inventory. Selecting a command brings up a dialogue box in the middle of the screen, and the mouse and numeric keypad are used to move your character, or in the combat sections to select fighting moves such as thrust, low parry or dodge left.

It's also possible to type in text commands, although the vocabulary recognised is fairly limited.

After getting stuck in the obligatory boring maze I lost interest; if you enjoy this sort of thing you may want to look out for *Quest for Glory II: Trial by Fire*, but wise old man he say, steer clear of adventure games written by husband-and-wife teams called Lori and Corey.

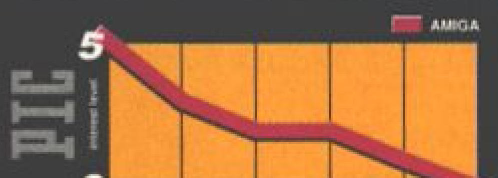
● **Chris Jenkins**



(Top) Standard fare from Sierra. Lots of hand-drawn scenes and a lot of exploring to do.

(Left) Down the market. Watch out for those pickpockets.

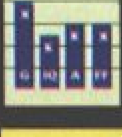
(Bottom) Toshur is a pottery merchant. (Gripping eh?)



Complex animated adventure games can be great fun, but the average graphics, slow response and tired humour of this title make it heavy going. If you enjoyed the prequel, fair enough, but *Trial By Fire* isn't a good introduction to this type of game.

ACE RATING

600



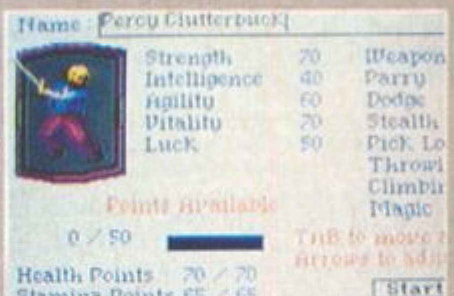
AMIGA

Though there's a massive game area to explore and plenty to do, the low speed, repetitive backgrounds and constant disk swapping will soon irritate you. Although *Trial By Fire* may look good on a PC, on the Amiga it doesn't impress.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned



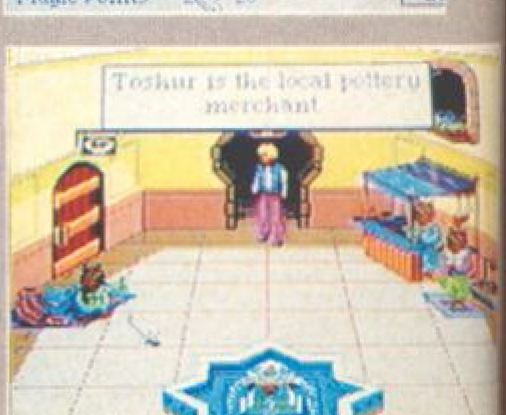
Name : Percy Clutterbuck

Strength	70	Weapon
Intelligence	40	Parry
Agility	60	Dodge
Vitality	70	Stealth
Luck	50	Pick Lo
		Throwi
		Climbi
		Magic

Points Available

0 / 50

Health Points 70 / 70
Stamina Points 65 / 65
Magic Points 20 / 20

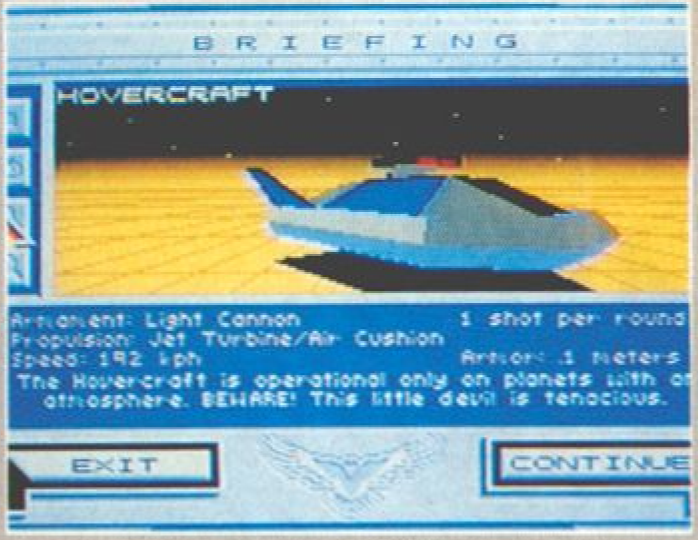


Toshur is the local pottery merchant.

STELLAR 7

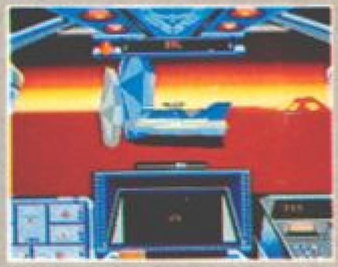
(Right) The Briefing Session. Impressive presentation as ever from Sierra.

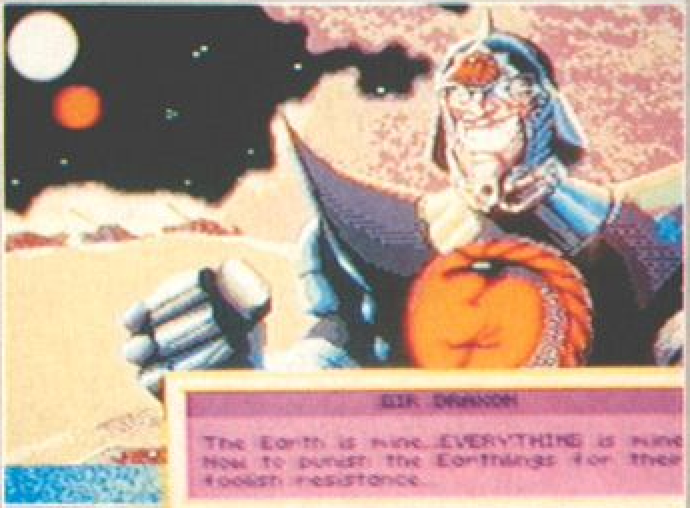
(Right, below) Scarey Monsters!



```
Armament: Light Cannon                1 shot per round
Propulsion: Jet Turbine/Air Cushion
Speed: 192 kph                        Armor: .1 meters
The Hovercraft is operational only on planets with a
  atmosphere. BEWARE! This little devil is tenacious.
```

(Below) The 3D graphics are certainly anything but the fastest in the world, but they're slick nonetheless.





```
GIR DRAXON
The Earth is mine...EVERYTHING is mine
Now to punish the Earthlings for their
foolish resistance...
```

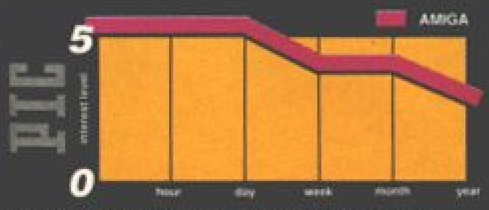
Dynamix's *Stellar 7* is an arcade epic which makes massive claims; the state-of-the-art in arcade action? A truly great game? Well, maybe if you haven't seen *Starglider*, or *Carrier Command*, or any of the several excellent solid-3D arcade games already in the arena.

But if you take the overblown claims on the packaging with a pinch of salt, you'll find that *Stellar 7* is pretty impressive on sheer scale alone; supplied on three disks, it requires 1 meg to run. To avoid a lot of disk-swapping, it is worth transferring the game to hard disk if possible.

The intro screens feature suitably solemn music and some excellent graphics of iron-fisted Arcturan space dictator Gir Draxon launching his spacefighters. As usual, the alien fiend has his beady eyes set on Earth, and only you, armed with the powerful Raven assault craft, can hope to penetrate his defences and destroy him and his flagship. Pretty familiar stuff.

The range of enemy craft you have to face is wide, to say the least. Vehicles such as the Sandsled, Laser Tank, Hovercraft, Prowler, Assault Tank, the invisible Stalker, Laser Battery, UFO-like Pulsar, winged Skimmer all line up to do battle. Also identified are the Warplink which you will need to find in order to transport to the next level, the Fuelbay you have to find to replenish your shields, and the giant humanoid Guardian which is the last barrier between you and the Warplink. You can rotate and zoom the pictures to get a better view, before moving to the preferences menu.

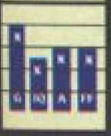
Here you choose mouse or joystick control (keyboard control is always active), switch on or off the story-telling panels, and set and music or sound effects. The music is fine, but too repetitive, and you'll want to switch it off to concentrate on the heat of battle. You can also adjust a graphic detail slider; set it at maximum and the vehicles and backgrounds wil be highly detailed, but there will be a significant reduction in animation speed.



Although *Stellar 7* isn't the state-of-the-art effort it claims to be, it a thundering good arcade romp with some spectacular designs, challenging action and well-coordinated sound and graphics. You should be gripped enough to want to fight your way right through to the end.

ACE RATING

780



AMIGA

Colourful graphics draw you into the action, but you may have to sacrifice some detail to avoid slow animation in busy sections. Inter-level screens are excellent, and the sound effects good though the music soon palls. The 3D effect are well up to the level of other titles, though they don't set any new standards.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Take on space dictator Gir Draxon in what SIERRA claims to be the state-of-the-art in arcade action

The main game display shows an out-of-cockpit view with some beautifully-detailed planetary backgrounds, and swarms of enemy ships surrounding you on your radar display. Your task is simply to destroy everything that moves, until the Guardian appears from a giant mothership; despatch him, find the Warplink and move to the next of the seven systems.

Weapon systems include shields, which falter under enemy attack; cannon which can fire two shells in each volley before a short pause to reload; super cannon with higher rate of fire; radar with a zoom option; short-term invisibility generator;"eel shield" which allows you to ram enemy vehicles; emergency thruster, jump thruster, mines, cloak detector and so on. Some of these features can only be gained by destroying enemy craft and collecting their power modules.

There's some good sampled speech, particularly chilling when you get blown up and Gir Draxon announces "Earth is mine! Everything is mine! Now to punish the Earthlings for their foolish resistance!"

Stellar 7 may be little more than a *Starglider* derivative, but it's well put together and warrants your own inspection.

● **Chris Jenkins**

Guard: "Sir! Sir! The robots are revolting!"

Commander: "Oooh, I've known that for a long time!"

©1972 BBC TV's Up Uranus!!

Ah, you can't beat a good joke... but you can certainly flog an old one to death.

Far in the future, scientists have developed the ultimate biomechanical 'droids. So, leaving the robots to do all life's boring bits (putting up shelves, reading The Daily Telegraph, watching The Late Show - that sort of thing), humankind settled down to a non-stop party of sun, sea, beer and sex.

Naturally the put-upon cyborgs began to get a bit fed-up (of Michael Ignatieff particularly). Lead by the mighty Arod 7, the metallic monsters rose against the enfeebled hedonistic humans who were literally caught with their trousers down.

METAL MUTANT

The times they are a-changing - and so are the 'droids - in SILMARILS/ PALACE's metamorphic monster masher

Luckily, one small band of ascetics had resisted the decadence of their fellows. They created the Metal Mutant, a shape-shifting machine capable of metamorphosing into three 'droids, each with distinct combat capabilities. You must take control of this ultimate battle 'droid as it hacks its way through the swamps and cities of Kronox in a quest to find Arod 7 and destroy it.

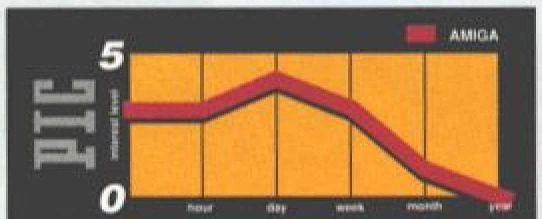
Metal Mutant has the unfortunate look of a 16-bit game released about three years ago. The dull flick-scrolling backdrops are distinctly minimalist as regards use of colour, while the Metal Mutant, although boasting an impressive range of decently-animated moves, seems to be constantly battling his way through viscous treacle. Thank goodness for the good use of sampled sounds, which add much needed polish to the proceedings.

Gameplay has a similarly dated feel, and bears strong similarities to Hewson's 8-bit classic *Exolon*. Each screen contains some obstacle, either combat or puzzle orientated, to overcome before the player can continue. Power-up cartridges may be found which add extra combat moves to one of the 'droid's three forms.

The various combat moves are all accessed from the joystick, and to be honest it's far too fiddly. For example, while pushing up may make the 'droid punch, pushing up and left may cause it to fire a grappling hook into the air. In combat, this need for precise joystick control can spell the difference between life and death.

The basic concept of *Metal Mutant* is appealing: having to switch between the three 'droids depending on the task in hand provides a neat twist on a rather hackneyed theme. But overall the past-its-sell-by-date gameplay, dull graphics and frustrating control conspire to deny the player much fun in either the short- or long-term.

● **David Upchurch**



A relatively easy lead in, though some of the baddies are of the frustrating one-shot'll-kill-ya variety. The game gets tougher - and more appealing - the further you get in, with the addition of a puzzle element.

ACE RATING

699

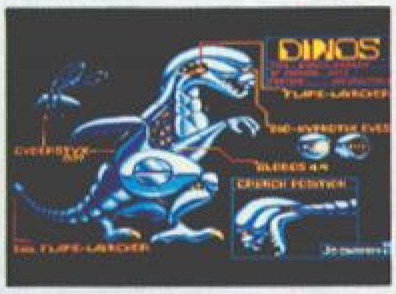
G	IQ	A	FF
6	4	7	6

AMIGA

Graphically underwhelming, though honour is saved by the atmospheric and amusing sound effects. The gameplay isn't as shallow as first suspected, but still barely rises above mildly absorbing. Gamers looking for an arcade adventure with a slight twist may get some fun out of this, but I can't say I did.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£25.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£25.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£25.99	OUT NOW



DINOS

Speed: **Medium.**

Weaponry: **Powerful bite. Flamethrower in jaws and tail. Hypnotic beam from eyes.**

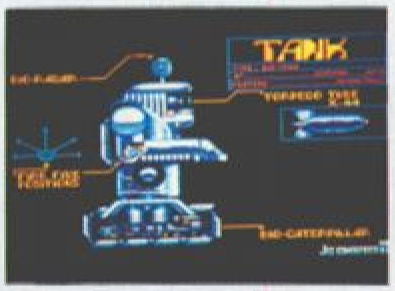
Special: **Remote-guided biomechanical 'mosquito' can trip switches.**

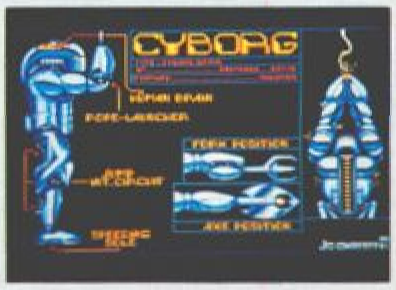
TANK

Speed: **Slow.**

Weaponry: **Multi-positional rapid-firing gun. Head-mounted high-impact missiles.**

Special: **None.**



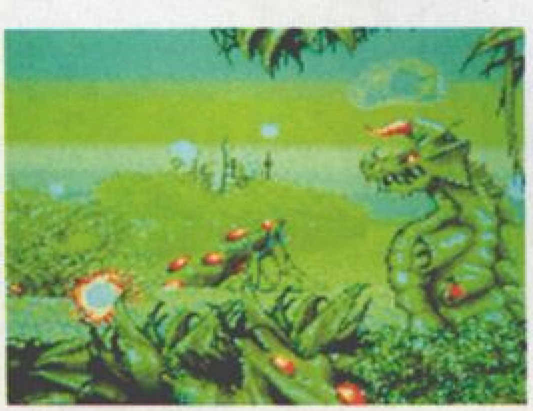


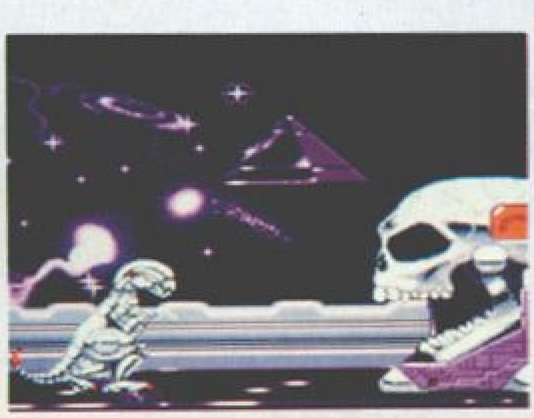
CYBORG

Speed: **Fast.**

Weaponry: **Axe & drill arm-fittings. Able to generate energy-draining forcefield.**

Special: **Magnetic grappling hook. Able to jump. Can recharge body energy from local power points.**





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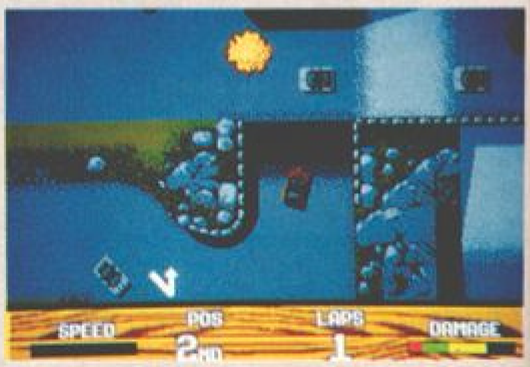
TNT Tricks 'n' Tactics

Super Cars II



A huge playing guide to *Supercars 2*, mini-cheats for *Chuck Rock* and *ESWAT*, PC tips by the bucket-full, a bumper console corner PLUS the chance for fame and fortune as we begin the search for our official ACE Tricks 'n' Tactics compiler!

Supercars 2

No sooner is the game on the shelves than it's in TNT. Are we quick or what? Hoards of would-be boy racers have felt the need for speed, so it's with great pleasure that we present these playing tips straight from the horse's - or should that be Gremlin's - mouth...

COURSE FEATURES

JUMPS - Take off as straight as possible to make sure of cleaning the gap but occasionally - when on a corner, for example - a slight angle of attack can stop you from hitting the wall on the other side. If you're stuck in a jam you'd do better to wait and take a run-up after the cars have passed.

CROSS OVERS

- Sorry! You are not allowed to cheat - you'll be docked a whole lap - so time them right going in and coming out. If you are knocked off course you must go back, even if it means letting all the other cars pass.

OPENING GATES

- Sometimes it's worth halting and waiting for them to open, but since they all open and close regularly you can usually anticipate the right time to make your move. Remember that you can still squeeze through a closing gate.

TUNNELS

- If you get stuck inside, keep turning until the screen starts to scroll the right way. Super missiles are useful here.

IN THE SHOP

Right, here's a little inside information. The weapons/power-ups have a maximum price, and each visit the prices are randomly set somewhere between that and 1/4 maximum. Trade-in prices are 3/4 of the sale price, so with a little insider knowledge you can make quite a killing...

IN THE GARAGE

This is fairly simple once you know the secret. Each repair has a maximum price, and the nearer the quoted cost is to that price the more good it will do. If a quote is almost maximum, then that repair type will often do most of the whole job. The maximum prices are:

WEAPON/POWER-UP	BUY	SELL	NOTES
Front missiles	100 - 400	75 - 300	Only really useful in exceptional circumstances. Best used to 'play the market' by snapping 'em up cheap and selling them later at a profit so you can buy the bigger weapons.
Rear missiles	150 - 600	110 - 450	Same as the front missiles.
Homing missiles	375 - 1500	280 - 1125	Universally useful, especially on thin road sections where they can be used to clear a path and on fast courses where you can't catch the other cars.
Super missiles	250 - 1000	185 - 750	Best used in tunnels where you can't see the other cars and on gated courses where there's the possibility you might suddenly meet cars coming the opposite way.
Mines	200 - 800	150 - 600	Great for keeping other cars off your tail - and especially good fun in two-player mode!
Turbo jump	125 - 500	90 - 375	Use to 'jump the queue' when coming off the starting grid. Otherwise only use them when standing still or when you've got to jump a train - you'll need about three cars length run-up to clear it n't pay through the nose for it. Get all three grades on hard level.
Ram	250 - 1000	185 - 750	Okay, but you'll incur a lot of damage if you use this method to get past opposing cars!
Engine	1250 - 5000	935 - 3750	The higher top speeds are vital on the higher levels, but be sure to pick 'em up cheap as they can be real dosh eaters.

REPAIR	MAX. COST
Spark plugs	£400
Exhaust	£800
Gear box	£600
Brakes	£400
Panels/body	£1000
Tyres	£600
Steering	£800
Suspension	£1000

Thus buying Spark Plug repairs at £390 will do much more good than Bodywork at £520.

It often pays to just do those repairs that will decrease your damage by a fair bit and are fairly cheap. It's hardly ever worth repairing everything, except on some of the higher levels where the damage incurred is proportionally higher.

COMMUNICATIONS SCREENS

These can be turned off, but once you know the answers they can provide an extra cash and points boost every game!

Generally, on the Dept of Transport screen the answers are the straight forward correct ones, and on the other screens it pays to be self confident - but not cheeky!

There are exceptions, however.

Basically the formula goes like this:

- One answer is always 'Right'.
- One answer is always 'Wrong'.
- The remaining answer has a random equal chance of being 'Right' or 'Wrong'. So you may think you know the answer and next time it will be wrong - or vice versa.

GENERAL POINTS

HANDBRAKE TURNS

Useful on tight corners. Just take your foot/finger off the accelerator and turn the car. When you're about half way towards your desired direction, re-apply the accelerator... It can help a lot - honest...

OVERTAKING

There are two main methods - well, three if you count missiles!

- Simply passing cars on the straight. (This is known as 'stating the bleeding obvious'.)
- Knocking out cars on corners. Just take the inside line and crash into the offending vehicle. They'll take a little while to get their bearings, by which time you'll be long gone.

Don't take undue risks - it's just not worth it. If you crash into a car, you will both end up slowing down, so if you can't get past, it's probably best to bide your time and wait for a better chance.

THE EASY TRACKS

1. No problems here - well, there shouldn't be. Save your missiles and avoid collisions.

2. Try to master the turn at the corner labelled 'X' to save valuable time. Make sure you're clear of trouble at the jump.

3. Again, avoid collisions and try to nudge cars out on corners to get past. Homing missiles are useful here.

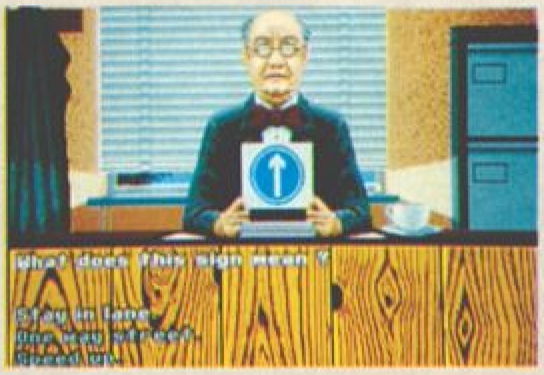
4. This track features lots of tunnels. Remember the earlier tip - if you get stuck in one rotate the car until the scroll kicks in. Super missiles are very handy. Beware: some of the enemy cars are armed with mines!

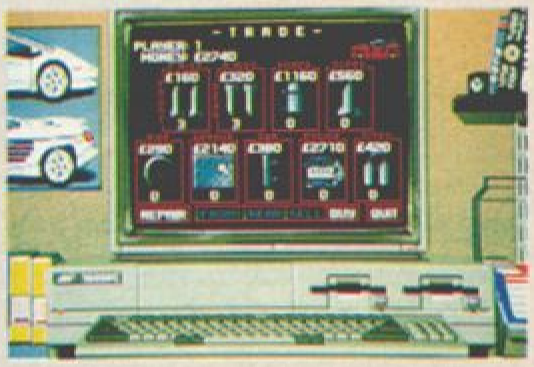
5. This track offers the driver a choice of routes. 'A' is ususally the best unless circumstance forces you otherwise, i.e. a missile bearing down on you.

6. Lots of tight corners, but the real problem is the jump. Make sure you're clear of the other cars and approach the ramp at full speed in the centre of the road. Turn at the right time and you should take off straight. Easy-ish.

7. As with Track 3, homing missiles are useful. Save time by going through the shortcuts but be careful not to get squashed. Spend all remaining cash.

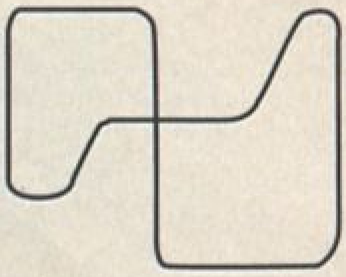
Next month look out for maps and guides to the Medium and Hard tracks!


What does this sign mean ?
Stay in lane.
One way street.
Speed up.



SPEED
POS
10th
LAPS
4
DAMAGE

CATS AGAINST THE BOMB
Player one - player 1

1


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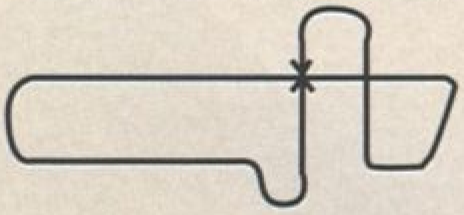

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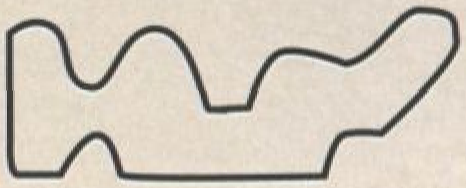

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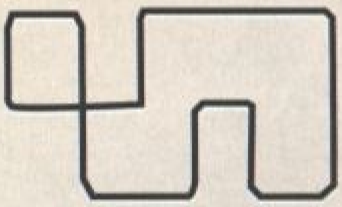

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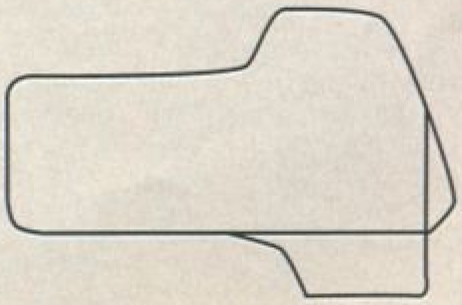

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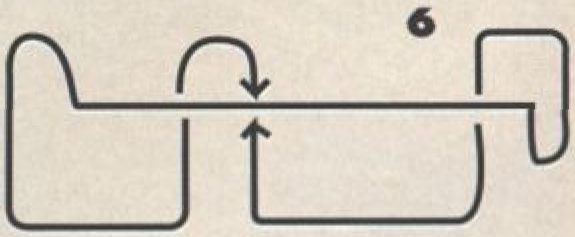

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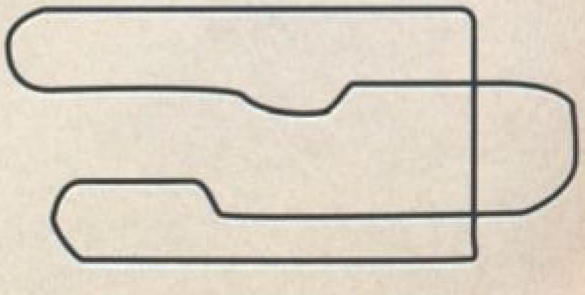


☞Chuck Rock

Much like policemen seem to be getting younger and younger, the hackers seem to be getting quicker and quicker. Alex 'Les' Rankin and Malcolm 'Gadget' McIlwee provide these codes which, once typed in on the title screen, give ol' Chuck a whole range of super-caveman powers...

ESTRANO	- Pressing left SHIFT makes Chuck fly.
MORTIMER	- Press F1 to F5 to select zone.
TURN FRAME	- Press number keys to select level.
FAST AINT THE WORD	- Infinite energy.
UNCLE SAMS	- Infinite energy.
LIFE IS MY DREAM	- Infinite energy.
SHE LOVES CLEANING WINDOWS	- Infinite energy.
ITS FAIRY BOWBELZ	- Infinite energy.

Turrican II

It's a pleasant surprise when a sequel turns out to be even better than the original, and this superb shoot-'em-up is one of those wonderful treats. For infinite lives on the Amiga incarnation simply enter the music menu and select the first option. Select it again and then press numbers 4 and 2. Tap the ESCAPE key twice to get into game and off you go...

Console Corner

MEGADRIVE

Cyberball

This conversion of the Tengen coin-op isn't half bad, but it's not a patch on John *Madden's Football*. Still, here's a tip to get you straight into the Superbowl game which, if you win, will let you watch the end-of-game sequence. Simply enter this code: 65BB BXII BFEX. Play ball!

Populous

This is a true software classic. But if you're finding the going a bit tough and fancy trying out some of the later worlds why not try this neat tip. Select a new level, and when asked for the password keep the B button pressed down and you'll be able to enter numbers as opposed to lettere. Experiment with a variety of codes to see where you end up! Your fate is in the lap of the Gods!

Strider

Not only is this one of the best coin-op conversions we've ever seen, it is also very, very, very, very tough! If you fancy the ability of being able to continually restart the game with full energy at the point you died, follow these guides: at the start of the game when the Master is laughing, push 'Down' on the joypad and then tap buttons A, C, B, C, A. Stroll on...

Ghouls 'N' Ghosts

Can Sega do no wrong with their coin-op conversions? Like *Strider*, this is nigh on faultless... except for its difficulty setting. Never mind, here's a cheat to let you jump levels. On the title screen, push the joypad Up, Down, Left and Right - you should hear a bell to check you've done it correctly. Now hold down the joypad as follows and press START:

2	Up.
3	Down.
4	Left.
5	Right.
Loki	Down & right.

GAMEBOY

Burai Fighter

This great multiway scrolling shoot-'em-up was reviewed last issue. Fancy the access codes to all five ACE levels? Of course you do. Here goes...

1	Just tap fire!
2	GBHC
3	MHCB
4	CDMN
5	KDPG

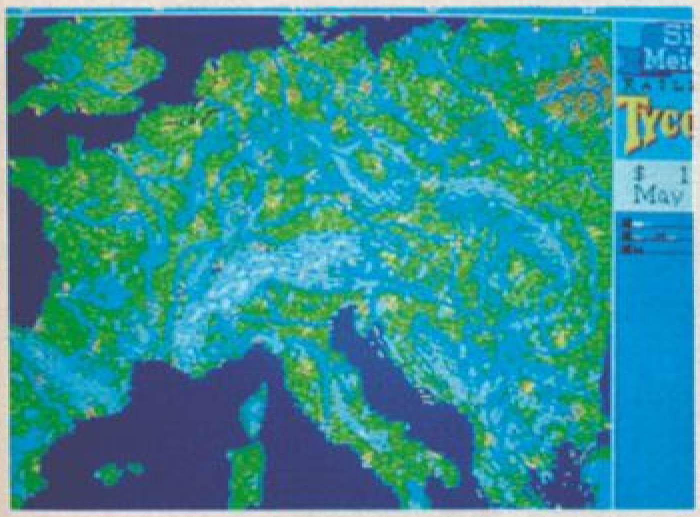
Finishing the fifth level reveals a totally new difficulty setting, ULTIMATE. But we'll leave you to battle your way through these strange new worlds...

Nemisis

Strangely enough, this is arguably the best conversion of this ageing coin-op blaster. If you want all the mega-weapons bolted on right from the word go, simply push Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, B, A and there you have it!

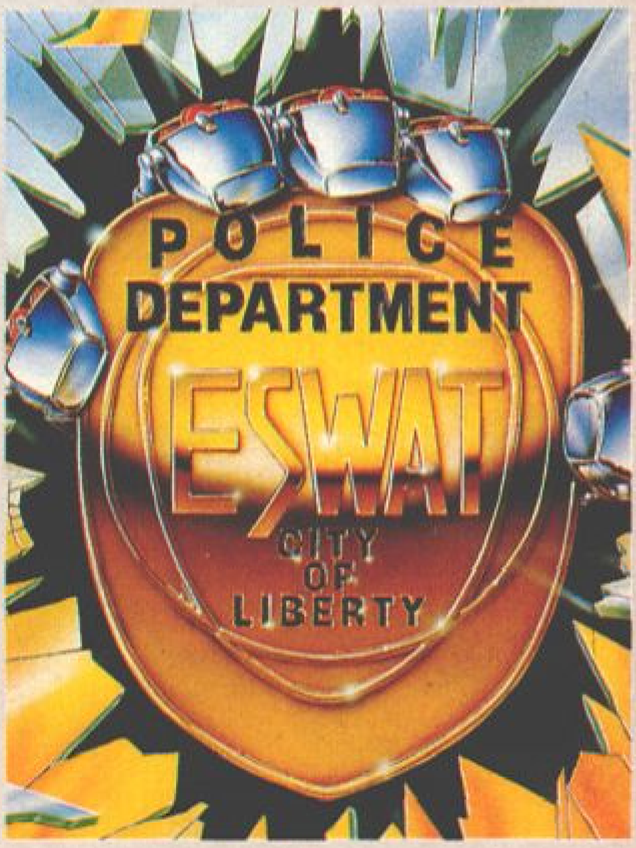
Railroad Tycoon

Jelte Bouma strikes again! But be warned that this cheat to generate more starting cash requires a little jiggery-pokery with the PC-TOOLS utility. Here goes...
● Select any saved file (i.e. RR0.SVE through RR4.SVE). ● Search for the 'E803' hexadecimal string. To do this in PC-TOOLS: press 'F', press F1, type 'E803' and then press ENTER. ● Replace 'E803' with 'FF7F'. ● Save the file, exit TOOLS and when you boot up the saved game you should have more than 30 million dollar in cash!!!! How's that for starting capital?
Note that the best thing to do is buy all your treasury stock (minus 10,000), since it becomes extremely valuable, then sell all your bonds and start building. When another railroad starts, buy it!



ESWAT

This less-than-wonderful coin-op conversion to the Amiga and Atari ST is just another on Les and Gadget's list of cracked games. For 99 credits just type in 'JUSTIFIED ANCIENTS OF MU MU' when the game's paused.



F19 Stealth Fighter

Yet another routine to type into your PC. This time around you can - as if by magic - bring any terminally downed pilots back from the afterlife by running this routine:

```
10      OPEN "R", 1, "ROSTER.FIL"
20      FIELD 1, 1 AS NR1$, 79 AS NR2$
30      FOR I=1 TO 10
40      LSET NR1$=CHR$(0)
50      PUT 1, I
60      NEXT I
70      CLOSE I
80      END
```

Note that your ROSTER.FIL will swell somewhat, but rest assured that this doesn't harm the game. Thanks to Jelte Bouma of Abcoude, Holland, for this.

GAME PAUSED

Prince Of Persia

Here's a particularly neat - and very useful - PC tip for this superbly animated sword 'n' turban action adventure from Broderbund/Domark. When is DOS, type PRINCE MEGAHIT to load the game. Then, simply pressing the letter 'K' on the keyboard will instantly make any guards encountered collapse down dead!

WANTED!

BRITAIN'S TOP TIPSTER

ACE is looking for a very special person. The sort of person who had *Turrican II* beat within a week of release. The sort of person who's found every level of *Super Mario World*. The sort of person who finds level 9-5 of Gameboy *Tetris* as easy as falling off a log. The sort of person who wants to pass on that valuable knowledge to others. In other words, the perfect person to write and edit ACE's Tricks 'n' Tactics!

The tipster we're looking for will want the challenge of making TNT the World's best tips section. You'll be required to write definitive playing guides and complete solutions, and compile extensive lists of cheats, hints and hacks, and ideally you should own - or at least have access to - all of the machines ACE covers (though we realise that's a pretty tall order!).

In return we offer the chance to see your name in print and rewards beyond the dreams of avarice! So apply now on the coupon below, enclosing a sample of your writing style (a brief playing guide or selection of tips, for example - 400 words should be enough) and any other information you feel relevant.

We know you're out there! Come on in!
SEND TO: TNT EDITOR JOB, ACE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

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I own the following machines:

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☐ IBM PC

☐ SEGA MEGADRIVE
☐ NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM
☐ ATARI LYNX
☐ SEGA GAMEGEAR
☐ NINTENDO GAMEBOY

I have access the following machines:

☐ AMIGA
☐ ATARI ST
☐ IBM PC

☐ SEGA MEGADRIVE
☐ NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM
☐ ATARI LYNX
☐ SEGA GAMEGEAR
☐ NINTENDO GAMEBOY

★ Don't forget to enclose the work samples ★

wailing sirens,

gum, baseball, firearms,

"sir" stormin'

clubs, yellow

a niceday, travellers

cheques, trai

tongues, nixon, paul new-

man's salad dressing

sinatra's spaghetti sauce,

robert de niro's

the land of the free, the

NEXT TIME ROUND...

It's not usual for us to devote hard-fought-for magazine space to a preview of our own next issue, but we felt obliged to let you in on our plans.

In case you hadn't guessed, certain members of the Editorial team are heading off to the States next month to report from the 1991 Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. Quite apart from the work, work, work, ethic of the event, we'll be having a ball talking to people like Dynamix, Sierra, Mindscape, EA, Nintendo, Sega, NEC, Atari, Origin, Commodore and Lucasfilm Games and we've devoted 50 pages of the August issue to give you all the information we can get.

The information we'll bring you covers all aspects of gaming, from the hot new title of next week, to the new coin-op and multi-player network systems of the future. And, of course, an Exclusive round-up of of all the News of the show before any other mag gets near it.

But our Stateside frenzy doesn't mean we'll be taking our eye of the ball here in Britain. No way. There will be a new and improved Tricks'n'Tactics department, a revamped previews section, a brand new section covering hot games' development and, of course, all the major software releases of the month reviewed in detail by our expert team of software examiners.

So, if you're unkeen on the idea of missing out on a detailed breakdown of every single important event to occur at the US Show, or the idea of missing out on the finest software reviews, you'd be wise to assure your own copy of the issue. And my, what a coincidence...

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- **EXCLUSIVE** reviews of the latest American software for your machine.

- **EXCLUSIVE** information on the future of computer games - you will be amazed!

Oh, Mr Newsagent,

I long to possess the August issue of ACE magazine, on sale July 19th. I know it will be stuffed with features, reviews and news, and realise I would be foolish to miss out. So, please

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96

117 T

101

103

111 K

119 F

121 T

118 A

122 T

in the PINK

BLASTER CONSOLE
WHAMMIGA COMPUTER
SUPER STONKER

Can't decide which box to pick up at the shops? Torn between an Amiga, an ST, an Archimedes, and a giant Panda? Check out the ACE Hardware guide on pages 104 for enlightenment

CONTENTS

92 ACE Charts

A new look for the industry's most authoritative, controversial charts – from now on we'll be printing both the ACE and Gallup charts side by side – so you can see not only which games have got the top review marks in ALL UK magazines, but also which games are getting the biggest sales. All that AND the chance to win a prize by predicting next month's results. Yay!

96 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Our definitive tech listings and buyer's guide. This month: 16-bit computers...Check out the power, the programs, and the potential of each machine.

117 The ACE Prize Crossword

Can you read faces? (4) And will you win a prize by cracking this tough computer game wordplay puzzle?

101 Bookwatch

Fancy a quiet corner, a comfy chair, and a good book? Sandra Vogel highlights a batch of titles that might appeal to the weary gamester...

103 Direct Line

Let's get intimate, stranger. Let's talk about YOUR machine. Amiga, PC, ST, Megadrive, Game Boy and Lynx owners get the latest instalment of the ACE machine-specific chat columns.

111 Hot off the Shelf

Our definitive listing of games that have received top ratings in ACE over the last few months and which should still be available on the shelves.

119 Public Domain

Pat Winstanley takes over Mark Smiddy's regular monthly PD slot and pinpoints some of the latest bargain basement games software to be found in the public domain...

121 The ACE Diary

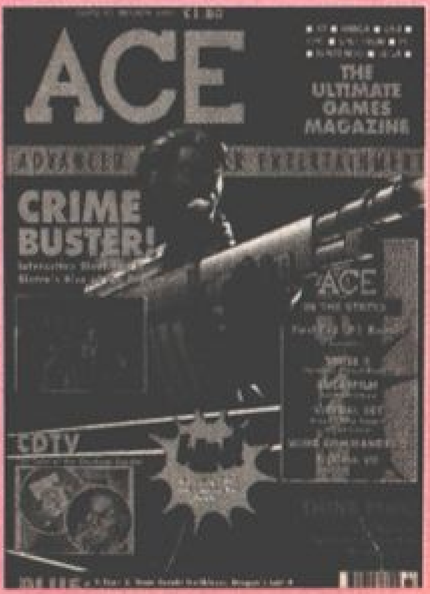
Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

118 ACE Readers Pages

Your chance to contact thousands of readers around the world.

122 The Blitter End

The world's most expensive phonebook? And how to win at chess.



ACE has brought you over 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, which gave you exclusive coverage of the first PC based VR system – then telephone 0858 410510 for availability and order details

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts are DIFFERENT! They rate games not according to sales, but according to the review marks they got in ALL British games mags...

Here they are – the new look, new data ACE charts, now better than ever. Our charts have always been the most useful for readers, because they're based on the actual review marks that games get and not on sales figures. That way, you can actually see which games you SHOULD be buying – not just which games everyone else is getting. The ACE charts help you follow the stars, not the crowd!

Each month, we collect all the available UK games magazines and check out the review marks for every game. Then we simply work out the average mark that ever game receives – the figure in the right hand column (out of 100). The higher mark, the better the reviews. AND you can win a prize every month – see the opposite page.

IBM PC

Sim Earth	**Ocean**	95.5
Space Quest IV	**Sierra**	87
Eye of the Beholder	**SSI/US Gold**	85.5
King's Quest V	**Sierra**	82.5
Life and Death 2	**Mindscape**	79.95

Sim Earth takes the top slot and is doing well in the sales charts too. Otherwise it's business as usual for the PC specialists.

AMIGA

Swiv	**Storm**	91.75
F-15 Strike Eagle 2	**Microprose**	91.67
Gods	**Bitmap Brothers**	89.27
Armour-Geddon	**Psygnosis**	89.25
PGA Tour Golf	**Electronic Arts**	88.74

Only two scores over 90%. As you can see from the Gallup charts below, both Armour Geddon and PGA are selling well.

ATARI ST

Lemmings	**Psygnosis**	93.34
Secret of Monkey Isl'd	**US Gold**	92
Gods	**Bitmap Brothers**	91.78
Int'l Karate Plus	**Hit Squad**	88.5
Metal Mutant	**Palace**	88

Gods is overtaken by Lemmings and Monkey Island. Neither Monkey Island nor Gods are in the sales charts yet, however.

GALLUP CHARTS

...and here's how they sold! ACE will be publishing sales charts AND reviews charts every month from now on...

The Gallup charts are new to ACE, but we'll be featuring them every month from now on. Unlike our own ACE charts, they're based exclusively on SALES. So if a game hits the high spots here, it's because numerous punters are beating a path to the shops to get hold of it.

What's interesting is that now you can compare the sales of a top game with the review marks it's been getting. However, you should remember that reviews often come out before a game is actually in the shops, so you may have to wait a while until you see the title appearing in the sales charts. You'll notice some pretty odd prices in the charts at the moment, thanks (or no thanks) to the 17.5% VAT rate.

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THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. This is the list of the companies whose games are getting the highest review marks at the moment. Any software house that gets to the top of this Roll Of Honour has a right to crack open a bottle of champagne...

Each month, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the SCORE column. This month, the figure includes 8-bit games, but from next month it will be 16-bit ONLY! At present, however, 8-bit games are taken into account, so, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC charts opposite. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

Although we print only the top 25 companies each month, we keep tabs on all of them. Occasionally a new company will enter the listings , in which case its name will be highlighted with an asterisk.

Finally, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review, so that all the figures below are the result of several reviews by several magazines, each with different opinions...

How HOT were last month's games?

You can find out just how good last month's games were by checking the figure below. Called the Software index, it's simply the average mark that ALL games got in reviews last month. Last month's games weren't quite as good as April's.

Software index: 74.95

PUBLISHER	SCORE
Digital Int'n	93.17
System 3	92.5
Storm	91.5
Microprose	89.59
Bitmap Brothers	89.21
Audiogenic	87.75
Infocom/Mastertronic	87.5
Psygnosis	84.86
Ocean	84.44
Hi-Tec	84
Core Design	83.86
Mastertronic	81
Gremlin	80.74
Palace	80.6
Sierra	80.42
UbiSoft	80.25
16 Blitz	80.11
Mirror Image	79.64
Code Masters	78.94
Hewson	78.5
Electronic Arts	77.88
Krisalis	77.67
Players Premier	77.25
SSI/US Gold	77.06
US Gold	76.87

WIN A PRIZE!

If you can predict the entries in next month's ACE charts (NOT in the Gallup charts), you can win a free game for your machine. Here's how...

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, the machine you own, your age, and the Round Number (in the box below).

STEP TWO

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the ACE charts next month. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP THREE

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
'The top softco will be...(name of company)'

STEP FOUR

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (24th June). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The first correct forecast for each chart taken out of the hat wins a prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize. And don't forget to include the Round Number!

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by June 24th 1991.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

THIS IS *ROUND 20*

NB Due to space limitation last month's winners will be announced in the next issue.

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HARD SELL

ard Sell is going through rather a traumatic time at the moment. It's in the process of evolving into a bigger, more comprehensive guide to both computer *and* console specifications. During this, if you will, spotty adolescence the less-popular machines have had to be left out for the moment. In compensation, the Gamegear makes it debut. A big round of applause, please...

COMPUTERS

ATARI STE

Models: Atari 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs
Package: 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Keep eyes peeled for current software bundles.
Memory: 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb. All machines can be expanded internally to 4Mb.
Processor: 8-MHz Motorola 68000
Recommended Retail Price: 520STE £399; 1040STE £499
Contact: Atari PR (0753) 33344

IN BRIEF
Hard days for the machine that arguably started the avalanche to 16-bit computers. The STE boasts capabilities almost on par with its arch-rival the Amiga, but the Commodore machine seems to be the one most people want these days. As shame, because this is still a great general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity, and thanks to its MIDI port is still the number one choice for MIDI musicians.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: Low-res 320 x 200; medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
Palette: 4096
Colours: Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
TV: Yes.
Monitor Output: RGB.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
Sprites: No.
Speed: Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs.*

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: Yes
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Three 8-bit PCM stereo sound channels.

HARDWARE
Disk Format: 3.5 inch – 720K
Disk Price: Around £1.50
Disk Performance: Fast, reliable.
Keyboard: 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
Joystick/Mouse: Two joystick ports are standard; two-button mouse is supplied with machine.

SOFTWARE
Existing Software Base: Excellent. The budget market provides a relatively cheap way of building up an impressive collection of software classics.
Current Releases: None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
Games: Across the board.
Graphics: Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
Music: Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
Prospects: Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the chances of a sudden boom of interest in the ST Stateside look very slim.
Software Loading: No problems at all. The STE's drive is fast and friendly to the ear. Be warned that some companies still release games on two or more single-sided discs (a hang on from the old days when the ST had single-sided drives) which can mean unnecessary and annoying bouts of disc swapping.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Very common and quite cheap. Beware very old, single sided ST machines.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty

COMMODORE AMIGA

Models: Amiga A500; A1500; A2000; A3000
Package: A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A1500 and A2000 have separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
Memory: A500 512K; A1500 & A2000 1Mb; A3000 2Mb.
Processor: 500/1500/2000 Motorola 68000; A3000 68030, 16 or 25MHz
Recommended Retail Price: A500 £NA; Screen Gems £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90s pack £579.99 (all packs inc A500); A1500 from £999; A2000 from £1199(for 1Mb+20Mb hard disk); A3000 from £3160(for 2Mb+40Mb hard disk). (All prices inc VAT).
Contact: Commodore (0628) 770088

IN BRIEF
A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A1500 is near-identical spec-wise to the A2000, but cheaper. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes *Workbench 2*, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz/40Mb hard disk to a 25MHz/100Mb disc.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
Palette: 4096
Colours: 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
TV: With modulator.
Monitor Output: SCART + composite video in monochrome.
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: C1084 £349.99
Sprites: 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
Speed: Very fast with good software.

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No. Third party interfaces available.
Stereo Output: 2 phono connectors.
Performance: Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8-bit digital sound into the four channels.

HARDWARE
Disk Format: 3.5inch – 837K; A3000 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
Disk Price: Around £1.50.
Disk Performance: Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
Keyboard: 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
Joystick/Mouse: Two-button mouse supplied as standard.
Interfaces: Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A1500 & A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A1500, A2000 and A3000.

SOFTWARE
Existing Software Base: Similar to the ST.
Current Releases: Everyone's doing them.
Games: Something for everyone.
Graphics: Quality and range is unsurpassed.
Music: Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
Prospects: Excellent.
Software Loading: Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
Second Hand Availability: Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
Maintenance: One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

IBM PC

Model: IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
Package: Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
Memory: Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
Processor: Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
Recommended Retail Price: Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

IN BRIEF
Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic

(most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/ST beating display; and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).

Resolution: CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384; VGA 800 x 600.

Palette: CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64; VGA 256

Colours: CGA 4; EGA 16; VGA 64; Hercules 2

Monitor Output: TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (E/VGA)

Monitor Options: Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome displays – check before buying.

Sprites: None

Speed: From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 80486

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such Roland (£380) and Ad-Lib (£150) - which is fast becoming a standard - provide synthesiser-quality sound through an amplifier.

MIDI: Third part interfaces available.

Stereo Output: With boards, yes.

Performance: Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

HARDWARE

Disk Format: 5.25in –180/360K/ 1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb

Disk Price: 60p – £3.00

Disk Performance: Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.

Keyboard: Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it easier to use.

Joystick/Mouse: Neither supplied as standard. The better clones include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (*Windows*) has become more popular.

SOFTWARE

Existing Software Base: Vast!

Current Releases: All major software houses now produce something for the PC, with many now supporting the superior E/VGA modes.

Games: Most of the best Amiga /ST titles appear on the PC eventually.

Graphics: Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent. On a standard CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is.

Music: Unexpanded it's pathetic. However, add-on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on a home computer.

Prospects: The PC is the eternal champion – as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better equipment.

Software Loading: Fast and reliable; very fast from hard disk.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Watch out for package deals form large chains and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.

Second Hand Availability: Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard.

Maintenance: Usually one year's guarantee – but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fix in-situ free.

CONSOLES

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx. Pay extra for peripherals and inclusive *California Games.*

Processor: 16-MHz 6502

Console Memory: 64K

Recommended Retail Price: £79.99 (£99.99 with peripherals; £129.99 with peripherals and game).

Contact: Atari PR (071-388) 9871

IN BRIEF

Designed by the man behind the Amiga, the Lynx is an amazing handheld. After a shaky start, the Lynx is doing fine and - if the rumours are to be believed - is starting to take off in the States. Its most obvious competitor, the Gamegear, lacks the Lynx's frills, but makes up for it with smaller unit size and TV adaptor.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102

Palette: 4096

Colours: 16

TV: No

Monitor Output: No

Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5" backlit colour LCD

Monitor Options: None

Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!

Speed: Fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Four-channel, five octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Eight-way joypad.

Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.

Cartridge Memory: 8Mb

Existing Software Base: Very small.

Current Releases: *California Games* is a great 'freebie'.

Prospects: Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: Very few

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★

Overall: ★★★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.

Processor: 1-MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.

Console Memory: 8K

Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.

Contact: Deighton PR (071-836) 2973

IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and games making use of the two-player link-up option are tremendous fun (especially the superb freebie *Tetris*).

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.

Colours: 4 grey shades.

Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.

Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixel blocks..

Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.

Ports: Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-25.

Cartridge Memory: 64K

Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.

Current Releases: Increasing

Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Avail.: Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.

Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★

Sound: ★★★★

Expansion: ★★

Overall: ★★★★★

NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM

Package: Console unit, controller unit and *Super Mario World.*

Processor: 3.58 MHz 65C816.

Console Memory: Not known

Recommended Retail Price: N/A (Japan price = £100)

Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

With the weight of all-powerful Nintendo behind it, the Famicom can hardly fail. Although not hugely superior to the Sega Megadrive technically, it's the games that impress - notably the bundled *Mario World* (which will no doubt help sales no end) and *F-Zero.* That said, there are some real duffers amongst the gems (*Big Run,* anyone?), but it's still early days yet. The Super Famicom's enormous games potential has barely been scratched.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 512 x 512..

Palette: 32,768

Colours: 256

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB, SCART

Sprites: 128.

Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 8 Channel custom 16-bit PCM/digital.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied.

Ports: One big expansion port.

SOFTWARE

Price: £40-50.

Cartridge Memory: 16 Mb..

Existing Software Base: Small.

Current Releases: Lots, and plenty more planned.

Prospects: How can it fail? Back orders were in the millions before it was launched.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Grey import.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: Take care- grey imports are rarely under warranty.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

SEGA GAMEGEAR

Package: Gamegear unit.

Processor: 3.58-MHz Z80A

Console Memory: 8K RAM/16K Video RAM.

Recommended Retail Price: £99.99

Contact: Sega (071-727) 8070

IN BRIEF

Opinion used to be that the Gamegear was going to be the handsdown winner in the battle of the colour handhelds. But times - and, more importantly, prices - have changed. The Lynx, a technically superior machine with some fine games available for it, has had its price slashed and - if US sources are correct - is enjoying a sudden upswing in support from American consumers. In the Gamegear's favour are the clout of mighty Sega and the potential to turn the unit into a portable TV via a cheap adaptor (around £50 is current estimate). But at the moment, it's anybody's game.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 146

Palette: 4096

Colours: 16

TV: No.

Monitor Output: No.

Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.2" back-lit colour LCD.

Monitor Options: None.

Sprites: Not known.

Speed: Okay.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Good.

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Three-channel PSG sound channels + noise channel.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Eight-way joypad.

Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack; TV tuner port.

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £20-25

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Small.

Current Releases: Few as yet, but lots in the pipeline.

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★

Sound: ★★★★

Expansion: ★★★★

Overall: ★★★★

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Package: Console unit, controller, and *Mickey Mouse or Moonwalker* game.

Processor: 8-MHz 68000 + Z80B

Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.

Recommended Retail Price: £149.99.

Contact: Virgin Mastertronic (071-727) 8070

IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224

Palette: 512

Colours: 64

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

Sprites: 80

Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Good

Current Releases: Lots.

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Avail.: Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.

Maintenance: One year on UK machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

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Sim City fans, King's Quest freaks, technical ignorami (yes, that IS the plural of ignoramus), deep space tourists, and fantasy artists, there's a book here for YOU. Sandra Vogel checks out some of the latest releases to hit the shelves...

THE GUIDE TO FANTASY ART TECHNIQUES

Martyn Dean
Paper Tiger £8.95
Art and graphics

If you have ver tried to settle down with pen and paper and produce a picture that is stunning, attention grabbing, and unique, chances are that you will have given up. Fantasy art is one of the most challenging categories as you need to avoid all the old cliches and yet remain true to the genre. This new book gives an insight into how some of the greats of fantasy art go about their work: Jim Burnes, Ian Miller, Patrick Woodrofe, Philip Castle, Syd Mead, Chris Foss, Martin Bower, and Boris Vallejo all give away some of their secrets. The book is littered with examples of the work of each of the artists included, in many cases preparatory sketches are placed alongside the finished pieces.

GENERAL COMMENT

Whatever your artistic competence, you'll learn something from this one.

IQ FACTOR	5
SHELF LIFE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	7
OVERALL	7

YOUR SPACE FLIGHT MANUAL

Daniel Ashford and Patrick Collins
Headline Books £10.95
Technical

According to Ashford and Collins, you could be a tourist in space within the next twenty years, and their lavishly illustrated book takes you through the logistical steps which need to be taken before space tourism becomes a reality. Development of the market, the design of the spacebus and spacecab, and the setting and maintenance of safety standards are all covered.

The authors also take note of the military impreative that has directed much of the development of space technology this far. As long ago as the 1950's, drawing boards were boasting plans for relaunchable space vehicles. All were shelved, however, in favour of military developments and this appears to have set the pattern ever since.

GENERAL COMMENT

Liberally illustrated with a mixture of photographs and drawings, and full of information about the current situation and projected future developments.

IQ FACTOR	7
SHELF LIFE	6
VALUE FOR MONEY	6
OVERALL	7

THE SIM CITY PLANNING COMMISSION HANDBOOK

Johnny L Wilson
McGraw Hill $14.95
Gaming help

They reckon that something like 400,000 copies of Sim City have been sold worldwide and while author Will Wright has moved on to Sim Earth, there are still many computer owners spending countless happy hours trying to develop the ultimate metropolis. This book is intended as a companion for these late night developers and should appeal to Sim City experts and novices alike. It includes a lot of strategic information for playing the game and cleverly integrates this with information about real city planning both contemporary and historical. Topics covered include town panning, transport and population issues, ecological and environmental considerations, fiscal (i.e. economical and financial) matters, and much more.

The book offers many examples of various famous attempts at structured city planning and, to the credit of the author, these examples are discussed in such a way as to be of genuine help in using Sim City rather than simply taking a dry, academic approach. Most of the chapeters in the book integrate factual information and examples from the game in an imaginative manner. This helps to retain the realistic feel of Sim City itself and illustrates the power of the simulation as it sits very comfortably next to real life examples.

GENERAL COMMENT

Every user of Sim City should get something out of this well produced book.

IQ FACTOR	6
SHELF LIFE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	7
OVERALL	7

THE KINGS QUEST COMPANION

Peter Spear
McGraw Hill $14.95
Gaming help

Chances are, most of us have spent some time over at least one of the King's Quest series, now in its fifth incarnation following its conception way back in 1984 as Quest for the Crown, when the format broke new ground with its animated central character.

This book takes you through the first four KQ adventures (tough luck, KQ5 fans) and gives you vital information to help you complete each one. Note that this is not a hints book, however – we're talking total solutions here, but solutions with a difference. The info is presented in the form of a story and you can read as much or as little as you like before returning to the game.

In addition to these 'serialisations', you'll find a chapeter called The Easy Way Out, which takes a more step-by-step approach to some of the tougher problems. There's also a section entitled The Final Score which lists every action in each of the four games for which points are awarded. Alongside The Encyclopaedia of Daventry, this little number will tell you all you need to know to crack Sierra's corkers.

GENERAL COMMENT

If you feel the need for a helping hand in KQ1 to 4, reach out for this one.

IQ FACTOR	5
SHELF LIFE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	7
OVERALL	7

THE OXFORD REFERENCE DICTIONARY OF COMPUTING

Oxford University Press £6.99
Technical

If you don't know your CGA fromyour EGA, VGA, or SVGA and have never cared about any of them, stop here. On the other hand, if you have a hankering to comprehend obscure acronyms and obscurer technology, you could do a lot worse than this little book, now in its third edition and newly published in paperback. Not overpriced, you get 500 pages of definitions relating to 4500 technical terms plus a reasonable splattering of illustrations.

The range of entries is wide, from Bitnet to DMA, from PRESTEL to Monte Carlo Methods (apparently not a method of birth control!).

GENERAL COMMENT

Everyone needs some sort of technical dictionary on their shelf, and this fits the bill nicely.

IQ FACTOR	5
SHELF LIFE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	8
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To YOUR micro...

Monthly machine specific columns for the users of the six most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...

MEGADRIVE

How we laughed! Here at ACE we always try to look at games from a machine-owner's point-of-view, rather than adopting that jaded-old-hack approach favoured by some of our sister publications.

So we were not a little excited when a rare batch of *official* Megadrive releases rolled into the office from Sega. It was like so much mana from Megadrive heaven.

Dick Tracey, *Shadow Dancer*, *Crackdown* and *Gain Ground* all lay next to our 'Drive for a brief time, looking so good. So unit-like, so ready-to go. How wrong we were.

Although we'd waxed on and on about the perils of purchasing imported Megadrives, warning users about the incompatibility problems which may emerge once a body of home-duplicated games were on the market, we'd never actually encountered the problems ourselves. Until now.

Imagine our surprise to discover that our (Imported) Megadrive wouldn't even *turn on* with the British cartridges plugged in.

Now, our gripe is not really with this system. Sega have always maintained that people should wait for the official machine, and now their warnings have born fruit.

However, there are a number of points which make the situation far from satisfactory.

For a start, the computer market thrives on innovation, technological breakthroughs - in short, the next Big Thing. With a machine as exciting as the Megadrive, trying to kerb the public's excitement is a hopeless task. It is inevitable that whoever can supply the newest products soonest will get the sales.

With only minor screw-driver activity, unscrupulous owners can adapt their imported consoles to run official software anyway. The result? Owners who were loyal to the Megadrive brand feel penalised by Sega for trying to board the Megadrive bandwagon early, and irritated by having to cut corners and perform experiments on their machines in order to run official software.

So, how do things lie now? Irritated import-owners. Sega losing software sales to a percentage of those owners who don't fancy the screw-driver route. And those people who waited for the official UK Megadrive to appear *still* not able to play the newest releases. A far from happy situation.

The only way to beat the grey importers at their own game, if that is indeed what Sega wish to do, is to *officially* release all the new titles *now*, removing any possible incentive for people to buy unofficial Megadrives or games.

●Richard Evans

IBM PC

It occured to us that we hadn't made too much of PC tips recently. HInts and cheats for PC games usually aren't the stuff visually attractive pages are made of. Lots of adventure and strategy information, useful as it may be does little to live n up the pages. So, having talked to the powers that be at ACE towers, I've had the go-ahead for a serious batch of tips this month.

And so, without further ado...

RICK DANGEROUS

More people than usual have contacted us requesting help with the exploits of the pith-helmeted adventurer. To be honest, we can't keep away from Rick ourselves, always sneaking a couple of crafty goes whenever we get the chance. If you've having difficulties in the early stages, you may find some help in the following.

Level One

Carry on running away from the boulder which follows you. Pull to the right on the final fall to miss the boulder and the 'orrible little Goolu. Kill the next Goolu by shooting him and then collect the mask from the first step.

Avoid the third Goolu by leaving the ladder when he moves past you on the left. Run away from him and climb down the ladder.

When you enter the screen with the moving rock, let yourself fall down and hit the wooden pole at the bottom of the screen. You'll then have to dodge left to avoid the rock.

The rock will stop in the middle of the screen. Jump on top of it and them jump again to reach the wooden platform. Jump yet again to the left and touch the pole. Now jump up onto the stone platform on the right hand side and fall onto the moving rock to leave the room.

Still having problems? Why not use the cheat which the guys at Microprose so kindly supplied; once you've got to the second level, enter POOKY into the high-scores and you will continue the game from the level you last reached.

KINGS QUEST 4

The latest in a long line of Epic games from Sierra; King's Quest 4 is far from an easy title to get to grips with.

The Hauted House

Enter the parlor (on the left of the house), examine the books on the shelf and take the Shakespeare volume. Look at the picture and then examine the wall, revealing the secret door. Open the door by flipping the latch and take the shovel.

The Minstrel

Give the minstrel the book, He will repay the complement by giving you his lute. When you reach Pan, you must first play the lute and then make a present of it to him.

The Dwarf's House

Enter the house of the seven dwarves and clean up their room. When they appear, they will be pleased with your cleanliness and will invite you for a meal.

Take the pouch when they leave and give it back to the head dwarf whom you discover in the mine. In return, he gives you a lantern and allow you to keep the pouch.

The Pier

Go to the edge of the pier and wait til the fisherman enters his house. Follow him and offer him the pouch and, again, in return he will give you the pole.

Find the worm and catch it. Once you have got it, use it on the end of the pole as bait.

The Frog on the Pond

Take the Golden Ball from under the bridge and drop it in the pond. You'll get it back from the frog. Catch the frog and (blerg) kiss it.

Once the frog has turned into a handsome prince, you'll be given his crown.

The Waterfall

Walk to the waterfall and put the crown on your head. You'll turn into a small frog who can hop into the waterfall. Take the board, enter the cave and then take the bone. It's important that you don't dither around.

Happy Gaming!

●Jenny Taylor

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ATARI LYNX

BY PAUL GASCOIGNE*

Way-ay! I divvunt knaa wot I wuz thinkin o' the utha week oot on tha park. Still, I've reet lorned me lessun, and won' be hoofin' any other bogga aroon fer a good wile. Not cos me pins are all busted in. Naa - cos I've been givvun this reet canny toy from them fellas at Atari.

It's grand. I've been playing wi' it for a good week noo, an' I've got a few points wot I wanna mayke.

Lyin' here in me hospital bed, I'm kinda lucky, 'cos I can use the adaptor, allowin' us to have unlimited gamin'. An' I tell ya this, it's a good job, cos' judgin' by the intensity o' the colour screen, wot wi' it bein' back lit an all, I divvun reckon the batteries would keep a player of my calibba goin for more than a coupla oors.

Mind you, tha coolas are pretty good mind, with some reet impressive sprite handlin' an all. The hurdware must 'ave some decent capabilities, an' I'd like to see tha likes of *Gates of Zendacon* on tha black-'n'white Gameboy.

Bein' quite fit an all, the bulk o' tha Lynx divvunt bother me a whole lourd. It's a lot betta wi' the batteries oot as well. Mind you, I can imagine lourds of slightly weedier boggas findin' their arms gettin all bendy an' exhausted by the sheer weight o' the thing.

Personally I'd like ta see that reet smart Yankee version - ya knaa, the all shrunk doon one - over here reet soon.

Did yous spill my bedpan?

THAT'S ENOUGH GAZZA - ED

Yes, er, thanks Gazza. Your opinions on the Lynx are very... interesting. But enough of him.

Some potential Lynx buyers may be getting a bit confused about what they get for their money follwing the recent price cuts and bundle changes. I've got to admit it started to confuse me! Let's start by clarifying things:

- For the very reasonable price of £79.99 you get the most basic system. That's just the handheld unit on its own. Just add batteries and your away!

- For £99.99 you get the handheld unit plus all the hardware peripherals, including an AC adaptor so you can play the Lynx from the mains (which you'll soon find very handy!) and a multi-player link-up cable.

- For £129.99 you get the all the above plus a game, which is currently the superb *California Games*.

There you go. You pay your money and you take your choice.

PANTHER, PANTHER, BURNING BRIGHT...

Atari are still remaining tight-lipped about the hardware configuration of its soon-to-be-launched Super Famicom/Megadrive beating console. One thing's for sure - it's unlikely that it'll be compatible with the Lynx, mainly because the Panther is reputedly 68000-based (like the ST), whereas the Lynx is 6502-based (an 8-bit chip). I am keen to be proved wrong, though.

The Panther hardware is apparently finalised, with several software developer hard at work trying to get 15-20 titles ready for the machine's anticipated launch this Winter. Let's hope they get it right.

COMING SOON...

Lynx owners can look forward to some exciting releases in the next few months. Titles due for a September release include *Hard Drivin'*, *STUN Runner* and *World Class Soccer*. *STUN Runner* should convert pretty well to the Lynx - certainly the rapidly-enlarging tunnels should prove no problem for the machine's specialist hardware. Whether the dire gameplay of the original can be sufficiently tarted up is another matter.

● **Richard Evans**

*** Guest Writer Paul Gascoigne is a 64-year-old former Newcastle park keeper. A tragic accident with a litterspike has meant Paul has had to spend some time in hospital. Local charities have raised enough money to buy him a Lynx, which now occupies most of his time. Paul enjoys *Chip's Challenge* and chips for tea.**

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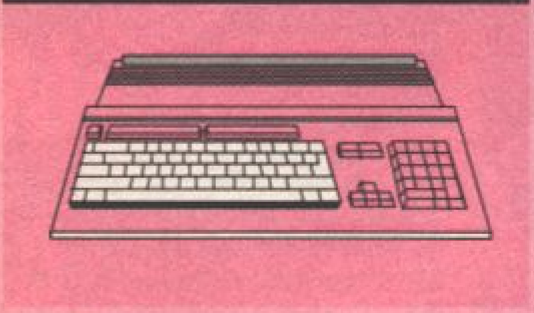


Although there are plenty of digital sound sampling packages for the Amiga, this doesn't seem to stop new companies trying for a slice of the market. Whether you are interested in adding sound effects to games you write yourself, producing music and graphics demos or composing using the Amiga and/or MIDI gear, the right sound sampling system can make all the difference.

But new products have to offer something really special to compete with established packages like the inexpensive Omega Projects Sound Trap III (£29.95), sophisticated packages like Microdeal's AMAS MIDI sampling system at £99.95, or even the state-of-the-art Audio Engineer package, consisting of Audiomaster III software and G-Soft's Audio Imager hardware, at £199.

Two new products which seem to have something novel to offer are Supersoft's Intersound, which costs £50, and new Dimensions' TechnoSound, which is £24.99 for the software or £34.99 including the hardware analog-to-digital conversion cartridge.

Intersound is a software-only package; theoretically it will work with any of the established hardware sampling units, but you would be advised to check with yours before you buy.

The software has one main window which is always open, and which allows you to display mono, left, right or stereo sample waveforms. Cursor movement, sample selectors and editing tools appear below the window.

With a sampling rate of up to 14 KHz, you get eight samples with around 20 total time on a 1 meg Amiga. You have a good range of recording, editing, zoom, redrawing, looping, invert, fadeout and replay functions; you can also add effects such as echo, reverb, flanging, vibrato and compression.

The eight samples can be selected using the SEG1-8 gadgets, and played at a chosen pitch, or you can play tunes from the Amiga's QWERTY keyboard. There are, though, no MIDI facilities.

InterSound's most unusual functions are the FM and AM modulation routines. These allow you define one sample as a modulator which changes the pitch or volume of the other; this is the technique used by Yamaha's DX7-series synthesizers, and can create very complex sounds. But it's a very tricky business, and is unlikely to be enough incentive for you to choose Intersound in itself.

Samples can be saved in IFF or raw data format, so they could be used with practically any other sampling system.

You will have to come to terms with the InterSound manual, which is pretty obscure, but this is apparently being re-written for the UK market.

Apart from *having no hardware provided, InterSound* offers almost all the facilities you need for recording and editing samples.

TechnoSound, though, is a much better option; not only is it cheaper, it comes complete with hardware, and incoprporates and a few novel features which make it more than just a sampler.

Operating in true stereo, the TechnoSound cartridge plugs into the printer port and has two phono socket inputs. The software is provided with a library of fifty example sounds including speech, synthesizer noises and game sound effects, and though he control layout is very colourful and cluttered, a sliding menu system makes it easy to find your way around.

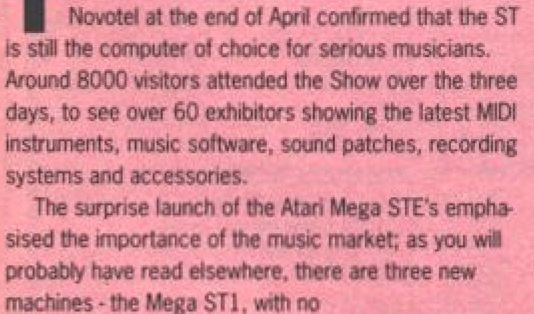
Apart from all the usual record, trim, cut/copy /paste, invert and loop functions, TechnoSound allows you to add to your samples a wide range of effects such as echo, reverb, phasing and vibrato.

These effects can also be added to incoming sounds in real time - in other words,TechnoSound can turn your Amiga into a digital effects unit with endless uses in home recording.

inputs. These effects let you distort your voice until you sound like anything from a drunk to a Dalek - or even a drunken Dalek. You can use preset effects or define your own, although whetherthe Synth features are of any more use than entertaining yourself at parties is open to debate.

●Chris Jenkins

ATARI ST



The 2nd MIDI Music Show at Hammersmith's Novotel at the end of April confirmed that the ST is still the computer of choice for serious musicians. Around 8000 visitors attended the Show over the three days, to see over 60 exhibitors showing the latest MIDI instruments, music software, sound patches, recording systems and accessories.

The surprise launch of the Atari Mega STE's emphasised the importance of the music market; as you will probably have read elsewhere, there are three new machines - the Mega ST1, with no hard disk at £599+VAT; ST2, with 48Mb hard disk drive and 2Mb RAM at £899+VAT; and Mega ST4, with 4 Mb RAM and hard disk at £999+VAT.

New markets for the ST like mixer automation and direct-to-hard disk recording, previously dominated by the Apple Macintosh, were also hot areas; Plasmec's ADAS system was launched at the Frankfurt Music Fair, but the MIDI Music Show was its first UK appearance. The system includes a hardware unit which connects between the ST and a hard disk drive, and system software which runs on any memory size of ST. The software uses so little memory that you can run a sequencer such as Notator, Cubase or Virtuoso at the same time, running your MIDI sequences while simultaneously recording audio tracks such as vocals or guitar parts to the hard disk in stereo at 44.1 or 48Khz. Recording time of course depends on the capacity of your hard disk.

The ADAS software includes editing, cueing and transport functions, and an optional SPDIF card allows the system to be used as a Digital Audio Tape (DAT) editing setup. At only £800, ADAS is the first truly affordable direct-to-hard-disk recording system.

Another affordable ST-based system is MIDIMation, a MIDI-based mixer automation system. This takes the hard work out of producing a final mix from a multi-track recording; using information stored in a popular sequencer package like Cubase or Notator, the MIDIMation hardware controls mixer channel levels in real-time. The system, distributed by 2001, works out at around £49 per mixer channel; like ADAS, it's not exactly cheap, but it is a fraction of the price of previous systems, and multiple hardware units can be connected to control larger mixers.

Another new ST product, this time from Intersound & Soft of Italy, was Sample Tools. This program is essentially a database/editor for owners of Roland digital sound samplers like the S-30. Because it allows the ST to read Roland sample disks directly, Sample Tools doesn't require you to do a time-consuming MIDI sample dump into the ST before catalogueing and sorting samples. There's also a realtime sample editing routine with an extensive range of graphic editing functions. Intersound are hoping to tie up UK distribution, then produce a Sample Tools package for Akai samplers.

MIDI Music showed the latest version of PG Music's Band-In-a-Box (V4.0), the impressive auto-accompaniment program for the ST, PC and Mac, which now includes more music styles as well as user-programmable styles. Celebrity guest Keith Emerson, former keyboard whizz of Emerson Lake & Palmer, seemed impressed!

Notably absent from the Show were two major distributors, MCMXCIX and Zone. However, both have major new ST bundles in the pipeline; MCM has Omega, an integrated desktop MIDI system from Dr.T. The package combines KCS 4.0 (Keyboard Controlled Sequencer), a 48-track program with 128 sequences, and up to 64 MIDI channels and SMPTE sync using extra hardware and Phantom software; TIGER V1.2, a graphic note and song editor, and Quickscore, a music transcription and printing program compatible with dot matrix and laser printers. Individual programs require 1 meg memory, and using MPE (Multi-Program Environment), the whole system can be integrated, though this requires 2 meg memory. The package comes with extensive manuals and a keyboard control template.

Zone Distribution has announced a large selection of new products; Band-In-A-Box V4.0, as mentioned earlier; Freestyle, a more sophisticated ST realtime arranger with five tracks - drums, bass, piano, brass and guitar, 32 preset style plus user-definable styles, intelligent chord input recognition by MIDI, standard MIDI file format compatibility and a MIDI Mixer utility.

Cost is £149, and there's an upgrade offer for B-I-A-B users.

●Chris Jenkins

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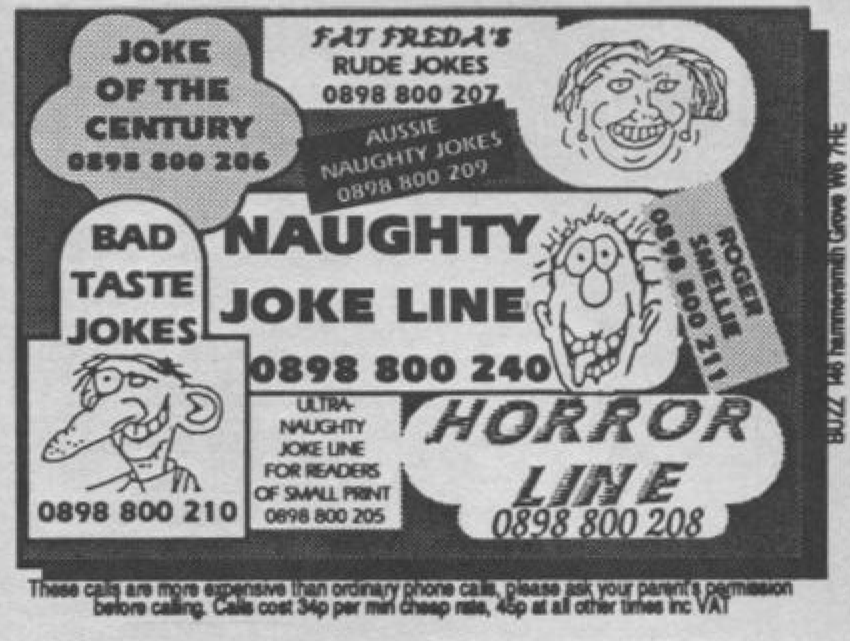
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01

GAMEBOY

Nintendo certainly aren't pulling any punches in the Great War. No, I'm not talking about the conflict that engulfed the World from 1914 to 1918, I'm talking about that other Great War, the War of the Handhelds!

Nintendo are determined to win the war for their side, and - as they well know - a major part of any war effort is Propoganda. Hence the recent appearance of slick flashy adverts on prime-time kids' TV, trying to persuade the public that the Gameboy is the handheld every streetwise dude should be seen to be playing (and, as we all know, how right they are!).

This four-week long TV campaign is costing Nintendo a whopping £750,000 and will run until the end of June. As anyone who's seen the ad will realise Nintendo are keen to push the fact that the World's most famous Italian plumber appears on the console, a fact illustrated by grainy-looking (sorry, it has to be said) screen shots from *Super Mario Land* being whizzed around the screen while a deep baritone voice mutters on about the superior qualities of the Nintendo B&W Wonder.

The thirty-second ad will be seen on six channels throughout the country including LWT, Central, STV, Yorkshire and Tyne-Tees. To follow up the (hoped for) increase in handheld sales, Nintendo apparently intend to bring out twenty new Game Paks over the next few months.

Stateside the Gameboy appears to go from strength to strength. Apparently it's generated an amazing $1.1 billion in sales during 1991 which, when translated, means sales of 5 million Gameboys and 25 million Game Paks in total. Isn't that incredible, eh?

But what of the Gameboy's rivals, the Atari Lynx and the just-launched Sega Gamegear? How much of a threat are they?

First, the Atari Lynx. This handheld has undergone some savage price-cutting in the last few months, and has dropped from £179.99 to just £79.99 - although that price is for the console alone, without any link-up cables, AC adaptors or games. With its fast colour graphics, nifty sprite technology (which can enlarge and shrink sprites of any size) and impressive sound, its a very strong competitor to the similarly-priced Gameboy.

If truth be told, the Lynx is technically a better machine than the Gameboy, but where it falls down badly is, like all colour handhelds, its battery life. It seems that no sooner have you started playing than the batteries pack up! Another, just as serious problem is the game quality. I haven't played one game on the Lynx that has kept me as enthralled as, say, *Tetris* or *Super Mario Land* on the Gameboy.

It appears this situation is analagous to the early '80s, when the Speccy and C64 fought it out for market supremacy. Although the Speccy was less able than the C64, the game's were generally much better - the game designers were forced to rely on good gameplay to make sales rather than flashy graphics and sound.

But as game designers get to know the Lynx, things will improve, and I don't think it'll be long before we see some really corking stuff coming out on Atari's machine.

And what of the Gamegear? This is basically a cut-down Master System, and its pros and cons are pretty much the same as the Lynx's: low battery life and uninspiring games. Of the two colour machines, the Lynx is the better, but Sega's higher profile with the games-buying public is bound to result in rapid volume sales.

THE VERDICT

This brief run-down may make it seem as if the Gameboy's prospects are a bit gloomy. Not at all. Having extensively played all the three machines I know which one I prefer - for sheer long-lasting portable fun the Gameboy wins hands down every time.

And if all else fails, there's always the possibility of further price cuts to keep sale high. Which is good news for you, the consumer.

You want tips? I know how you fell - so do I! Not one letter appeared last month bearing tips. I'm very disappointed in you, Gameboyers. If you don't send 'em, I can't print 'em!

● **David Upchurch**

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HOT OFF THE SHELF

The worst thing about June is that it's just starting to get sunny and warm when - Da! Da! Da! - the dreaded exams pounce! No time to get a tan. Got to revise.

Now I know the last thing you need is to be reminded of Exam Hell. The only reason I bring it up is because the perfect break from revision is a quick half-hour with a top new game. And how do you find out what's hot and what's not? Need I go on...?

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99
Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping , a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A game that should keep even the most jaded Chess fan happy, and provide a pleasant change for the more casual Chess player.

★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BOULDERDASH

Victor Musical Industries ● Gameboy ¥3400 (Import)
Yet another steal from the aging C64's catalogue of great games. Hey kids, remember this? Guide cute and cuddly Rockford around umpteen (that's journo-speak for more than can be counted on one hand) mazes of boulders and meanies in pursuit of diamonds. But bear in mind that digging around boulders can make them tumble down on your head! An arcade puzzle game of the most addictive kind and yet another game ideally suited to Nintendo's B&W handheld wonder.

★ ACE RATING 908 ON GAMEBOY

BRAT

Imageworks ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99
Where *Lemmings* lead the way, others now follow - and why not as long as the games are as good as *Brat*? Little Nathan, the World's naughtiest nappy-wearing nipper, wanders around various vertically-scrolling levels. Unfortunately he's a little stupid, and will happily walk off the edge of cliffs and into traps and monsters - unless you guide him otherwise by placing direction changing icons in his path. Those who are deft with the mouse can guide Nathan into the coins and toys littering the landscape for bonus points. A magic mix of cuteness and craftiness, *Brat* will have you playing into the small hours.

★ ACE RATING 850 ON AMIGA

CHUCK ROCK

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95
Unga-bunga! Poor Chuck Rock's spouse has been kidnapped by the fiendish Gary Gritter and is now held prisoner at the end of five massive levels of platform-pouncing, rock-throwing, belly-butting pandemonium. Graphically, *Chuck* is a real treat, with some hilariously animated dinosaurs and very slick 32-colour arcade-quality parallax scrolling. Although. when all is said and done, a fairly basic platform game, the varied backdrops, rapid pace, novel attack modes and humourous setting ensures that boredom won't set in.

★ ACE RATING 886 ON AMIGA

COHORT

Impressions ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £29.99
Wargames tend to fall between two stools, being too simple to satisfy the ardent fan and too tough to attract the uninitiated. *Cohort,* happily, manages to be all things to all people. The strategic and tactical sides of the game are rigorously realistic, yet the icon driven mode of interaction make it instantly accessible. Add some superb visuals and atmospheric sound FX (thundering hooves, clashing swords, screams of the dying, etc) and you have a fine game that will keep any would-be Caesar happy for months.

★ ACE RATING 890 ON AMIGA

FLAMES OF FREEDOM: MIDWINTER 2

Microprose ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● IBM PC £TBA
Now this is a challenge; how do you sum up a huge game like *FoF*? The big thaw has set in, and Midwinter is now Agora, the island HQ of the Atlantic Federation. You play one of their crack agents with the task of scuppering an impending attack by the evil Saharan Empire. The majority of the game takes place in a massive solid-3D world, with your spy able to use any mode of transport he/she may come across, everything from on-foot to helicopter. But this is no shoot-'em-up. There's more than enough strategy and subterfuge to keep any non-arcade fan happy. A major contender for game of the year - already!

★ ACE RATING 950 ON ATARI ST

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99
This violent clash between two solid-polygon generated pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, with a huge range of moves and a lot

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★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

GODS

Renegade ● Amiga £25.53 ● Atari ST £25.53 ● PC £TBA

Renegade crash onto the game's scene with this, their first release - and what a corker it is too! Set in Ancient Greece, the player controls a hunky warrior who must be guided through four levels of platforms, monsters and puzzles to a face-off with Something Very Nasty in the Underworld. Okay, so Renegade win no prizes for the written-by-computer plot but the implementation is something else - superb graphics, intelligent aliens (and they are smart, too!) and bags of clever surprises and secret bonuses to discover. It seems that the Bitmaps can do no wrong. Roll on *Magic Pockets*.

★ ACE RATING 908 ON AMIGA

JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts ● Megadrive £39.99

What a game! The definitive US footy game yet available on any home system. The graphics are superbly realistic - as is the gameplay - and the excitement is non-stop. The sampled grunts and groans add to the action. If you're a Megadrive owner then you'd be a mug to miss this. Set out for your software shop right now!

★ ACE RATING 904 ON SEGA MD

KILLING CLOUD

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

San Francisco, 1997. (By the way, have you noticed how many games are set in 1997? Why the bad reputation?) The city has been enveloped by a thick poisonous smog, causing untold chaos and leaving the populace at the mercy of psychotic criminal cults. As one of the last-surviving officers in the SFPD, its your job to try and restore law and order. The game takes the form of missions, where you must try and fly you hover-bike into the city (suitably protected, of course) and try to arrest criminals and so forth. Exciting street-level action depicted in smooth 3D and a highly atmospheric plot combine in a superb game that should please any would-be gang buster.

★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

In an age of ever-faster vector graphics and smoother parallax scrolls, Psygnosis was the last company expected to release a simple-looking game based on the suicidal tendencies of some cutesy little rodents. The object of the game is beautifully straightforward - you must guide a certain number of randomly-meandering lemmings to safety from one end of a peril-strewn level to the other.. You can endow chosen lemmings with a range of special abilities, such as climb or dig, with which you can get them past traps and obstacles. Incredibly playable and addictive, it's a game that will hopefully encourage programmers to spend as much time on a game's gameplay as its graphics.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON AMIGA

PIPE DREAM

El/Lucasfilm ● Gameboy £25 (Import)

Most readers will probably be more familiar with this game under its original title of *Pipemania*. All the action takes place on a 10 x 7 grid. Using a cursor you have to drop varying sections of piping onto the grid, with the aim of making a pipeline for 'flooz' to flow down. Should the flooz leak before it has passed through a set number of pipe sections then it's game over. Later levels introduce directional pipes (the flooz MUST flow a certain way) and obstacles. Infuriatingly addicitive - it's the sort of game the Gameboy was designed for.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON GAMEBOY

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here

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polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real *Indy*-style cliff-hanger aspect to it. Miss this and you'll be crying into your beer for weeks!

★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA

R-TYPE

IREM ● Gameboy £24.99 (Import)

In one fell swoop, this conversion of the classic coin-op snatches the crown of Top Gameboy Shoot-'Em-Up from *Nemesis*. All your old favourites are here: The Force; beam weapon power-up; Giger-esque end-of-level aliens; frantic actions; sweaty palm excitement. How do the programmers manage to pack so much into such a small package? Only IREM have the answer! If there's one niggling fault it's the warbling soundtrack, which cuts out annoyingly everytime a sound effect is played.

★ ACE RATING 820 ON GAMEBOY

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and - hard to believe I know - actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

SPEEDBALL 2

Mirrorsoft ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £TBA

The sequel to the Bitmap Bros' violent '88 hit. Basically more of the same but with improved graphics, a bigger multi-directional scrolling pitch (festooned with bumpers and ball energisers), extra power-ups and armour to pick up or buy between games, smoother control and a depth-enhancing player-manager element. Highly playable, and the power-ups do have a noticeable affect on the game. The Amiga version, in particular, is superbly atmospheric, mainly thanks to the sample-laden sound effects.. More fun than beating up your kid brother. Better, play this with your brother *then* beat him up

★ ACE RATING 903 ON AMIGA

STRIDER

Sega/Virgin ● Megadrive £39.95

This coin-op conversion was reviewed some time ago on home computer. Thankfully, the Megadrive incarnation is supremely superior - if you didn't know better you'd swear you were playing the arcade machine. Strider Hiryu has to jump and tumble through levels of acrade-perfect action. Stunning for its graphics, sound and gameplay, *Strider* is a must-buy for any Megadrive owner.

★ ACE RATING 919 ON SEGA MD

SUPER MARIOLAND

Nintendo ● Super Famicom (inc. with grey-import console)

Could this be the best platform game available? The game follows the seemingly never-ending adventures of Mario, as he jumps and joy-rides his way through 99 sub-levels of platform action. What makes the game so special - apart from its superlative graphics, stunning sound FX (the echo in the caves has to be heard to be believed) and super-satisfying control - is the never-ending variety in the gameplay; it's not all just running and jumping. Complete this and you can consider yourself a real games supremo. The best (and, so far, only) reason for splashing out on the Super Famicom is here.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON FAMICOM

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SUPER MONACO GP

US Gold ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £TBA

A superb conversion of the coin-op - what else could you expect from the enigmatic but oh-so-talented ZZKJ, the man behind such technically-stunning games as *Super Hang-On* and *Powerdrift*. Everything you want from a racing game is there - a sense of speed (with some *huge* roadside features whizzing by), a throaty roar from the engine, good control reponse, tricky courses and intelligently-driving opponents. The only place it falls down in comparison to, say, Gremlin's *Lotus*, is in the lack of courses. But as the review said, *SMGP* is well up with the leaders.

★ ACE RATING 871 ON AMIGA

SPACE QUEST IV

Sierra On-Line ● Atari ST £TBA ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £34.99

Top-Quality goofball space adventure with lots of humour and minimal dithering around. Sierra have managed to combine excellent graphics and a bizarre-yet-comprehendable time-travelling story line. Guide Roger Wilco through a roller-coaster adventure involving absolutely no typing and some excellent puzzle-design. Every location contains a surprise! Not too good if you own a slow PC, and is virtually unworkable from floppies. Otherwise, a pretty essential purchase if you can put up with the constant craziness.

★ ACE RATING 880 ON IBM PC

SWITCHBLADE 2

Gremlin ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

At last! A game to make the 16-bit console owners realise that they haven't got the monopoly on slick graphics and superb gameplay. Although a sequel, the game bears few similarities to its predecessor. The inspirations from the *Strider* coin-op are obvious: guide Hiro through level after level of baddy-laden mayhem, collecting varied (and wonderfully depicted) power-ups to help in the quest. Admittedly, there's very little here that you haven't seen before, but rarely has it been done so slickly.

★ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

TURRICAN 2

Rainbow Arts ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

There are some games that you've got to have, the original *Turrican* was one of them. It proved that, given the right programmers, the Amiga could do anything an arcade machine could do and better. The sequel, though still an excellent game, is perhaps a little to similar - i.e shoot everything - to its predecessor to become a classic in its own right. However, anyone looking to relive that old magic or has yet to discover it afresh can do no wrong forking out £25 for this. The Atari ST version (rated at 898) is especially worthy of mention for its superb graphics, which are nearly on par with the Amiga's.

★ ACE RATING 899 ON AMIGA

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but radically uses of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the high speed models.

★ ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC

WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans get down on your knees and pray - the future of adventure games is here. An essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC

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Branded

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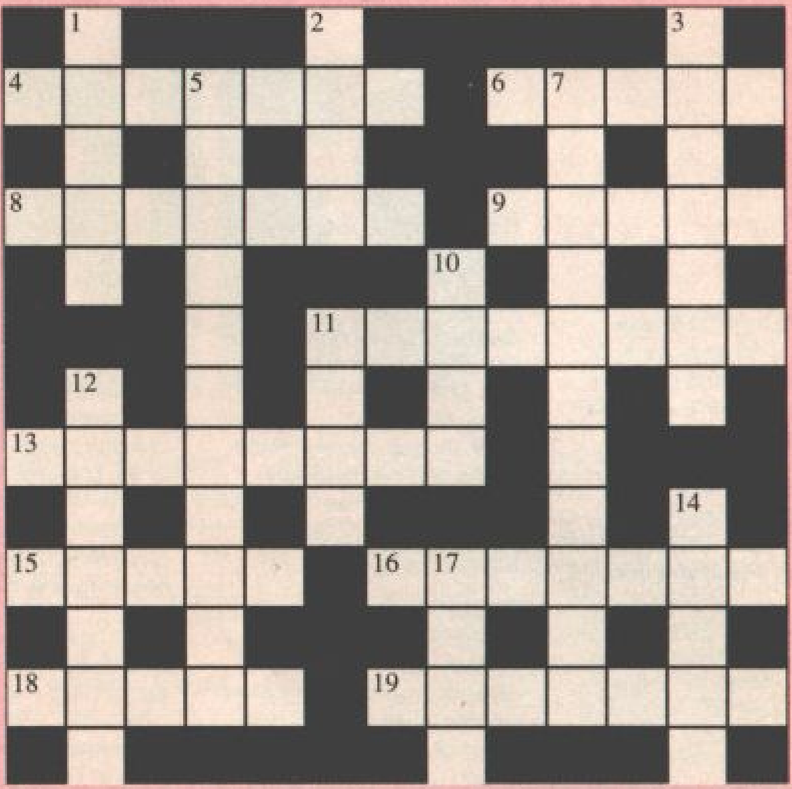
5.25" DSDD	(each) 0.75

ACE + WORD

PUZZLE PRIZES

If you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat, you'll get a free game for your machine. We regret that we cannot specify exact titles, but we'll do our utmost to ensure that the prizes get your adrenalin pumping. Don't forget to specify your machine format!



CLUES ACROSS

4 Rule Ida broke in game by Glyn Williams (3,4)
6 Short cars in US Gold game (5)
8 Dave is trapped in car game from Imageworks (7)
9 Before the heartless animal doctor gets the game (5)
11 First game aunt allowed from US Gold (8)
13 Terrible risk Lisa takes forming software house (8)
15 No ACE review of software house (5)
16 Idol takes an age about Elite game (7)
18 Later becomes wide awake (5)
19 Cooking Goose in Spielberg production (7)

CLUES DOWN

1 Article bird's written on first computer game (5)
2 Brother excited about present (4)
3 Spread out, rest act strangely (7)
5 Adoring Lars' new game from Empire (7,4)
7 Cor! Election rigged by games producer! (11)
10 For starters Mum's unhappy – Dad's stolen Rainbow Arts game (4)
11 Club game (4)
12 Count figures in game from Ubi Soft (7)
14 Fashion maker's first modulator-demodulator (5)
17 Screen symbol of flipping coin (4)

HOW TO ENTER

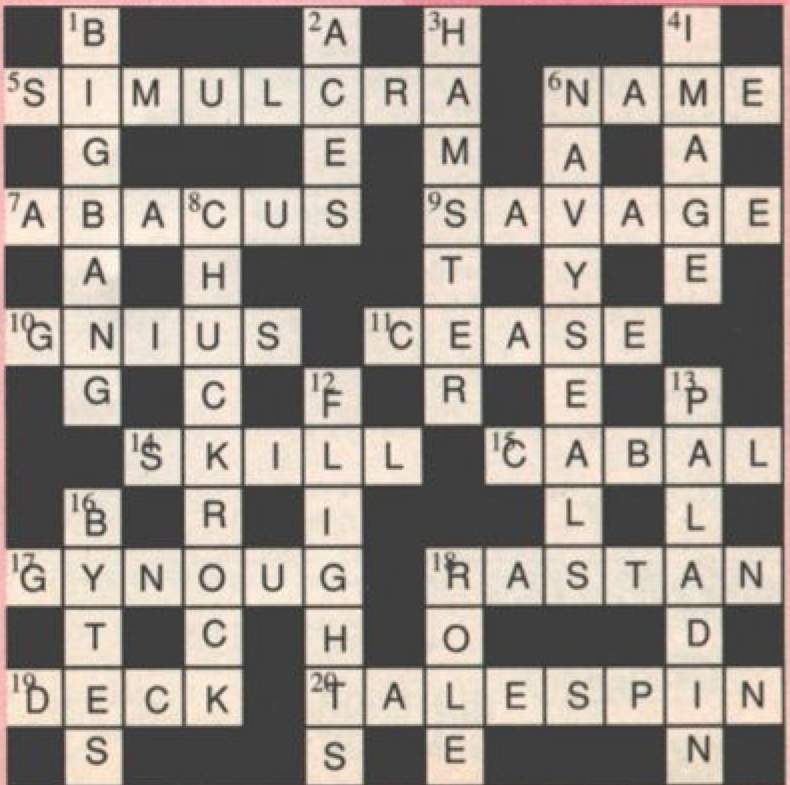
Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:

ACE July 91 Crossword,
Priory Court
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London, EC1R 3AU

NOTE that the closing date has had to be changed. From now on, it will always be the FIRST day of the month mentioned on the cover – in this case July 1st 1991.

JUNE 91 RESULT

The winner of the June 1991 will be announced next month. The solution is below...



	1B				2A		3H				4I	
5S	I	M	U	L	C	R	A		6N	A	M	E
	G				E		M		A		A	
7A	B	A	8C	U	S		9S	A	V	A	G	E
	A		H				T		Y		E	
10G	N	I	U	S		11C	E	A	S	E		
	G		C		12F		R		E		13P	
		14S	K	I	L	L		15C	A	B	A	L
	16B		R		I				L		L	
17G	Y	N	O	U	G		18R	A	S	T	A	N
	T		C		H		O				D	
19D	E	C	K		20T	A	L	E	S	P	I	N
	S				S		E				N	

Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS

ACE MAGAZINE DOES NOT CONDONE PIRACY! ANY ENTRIES WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE FEDERATION AGAINST SOFTWARE THEFT.

ACE READERS' PAGES

FOR SALE

ATARI 520 STFM Mouse joystick 2 drawing progs. 31 Hot software titles great condition all leads + 7 basis £400 Tel : 081-340-0655.

ATARI 520 STFM 1 Meg Drive, magazines and software value £800 sell for £300 ono Tel: 0706-826415.

ACE 1 to 43 Amiga and Amstrad games Contact Andrew Wong, 10 Gerlton, Tywyn, Gwynedd, LL36 9OE Tel: 0654-711122

NEW C16 Basic games prices £1.99 to £4.99 games with effort put into them! Colour, action, sounds. Details 0925-232466.

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Make lots of LEGAL money using tour micro. For info. Send SAE to Vincent Lahiff, Bally Keeffe Mangret Co, Limerick, Ireland

USER GROUPS

GAMEBOY Cartridge Hire All latest games Send a SAE to C.Briggs 106 Bromley Heath Rd, Downend, Bristol. BSI^ 6JN

HELPLINE

URGENTLY Seeking screen for Nintendo Gameboy who can help. Any Broken machines which still has a screen please contact Bernard Vigt, 243 Coopersti Greytown 3500, South Africa or Tel South Africa 0334-31936 please.

Can anyone help me with Dungeon Master. I can help with Space Quest 2, Gold Rush, Manhunter Sanfrancisco, Heroes of the Lance and War in Middle Earth. Write to Huu Tran 1145 Woodroffe Ave, Offawa, Ontario, Canada K2C 259.

Please help me I need a Atari 520STE (with 1Mb disk drive - nothing more) For that I will give you my Atari ST (perfect condition) single sided drive, 10 Empty 3m disks and 100!!! £ cash (or cheque) If you agree write to Sondre Sagsten, Tranergvn 6, 2800 GJOVIK, Norway or call 47-61-73756 after 15.30 (schooltime)

HELP needed! Leather of Godness 'Hitchikers solutions? Infocom Annar osrect 54 2300 Hamar Norway.

Dark Empire needed for the spec I will pay 10 bucks if you get back to me now!!Derry 7 Plas Rd, Rhos Pontardawe, Swansea SA8 3HD.

PLEASE HELP Maps and Tips for Amiga on Bards Tale 1 and 2 Contact Shaun 0489-576916 Thanks!!

CPC 464 owners HELP I am finding level 8 of R-Type hard, it seems possible, Can anyone help me with my problem with tips & cheats etc.. I can hekip anyone with problems on : Barbician, Mig 29, Soviet Fighter 2.99ver, Sword Slayer, Army Moves, Agent X2 Ninja Massacre, Super Tank Sim, Rebelstar, Express Raider, Operation, Green Beret & levels 1-7 of R-Type & nearly completed map of Batman (original version)send SAE for answers OGJ Pwlliwrch, Darowen, Machynlleth, Powys SY20 8NS.

Stuck in a game? Write to David Pearce 2 Powell Cresent Houndown Southampton SO4 4FF I should be able to help.

Somebody please help I'm stuck with Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy on the Amiga I acan get out of the front door of Arthurs house but got killed by the buldozer. A complete solution would greatly appreciated please send to : A Fimister, 19 Bennochy Rd, Kirkcaldy, Fife. KY2 5QU.

HELP I have C64 worth over £800 swap for Amiga A500 Tel: 021-427-7452.

Desperately need a Modem Write to The Samaritans Gaggin, Bandon, Couny Cork, Ireland. Amiga contacts also wanted in Ireland 023-42181.

HELP needed! Completely stuck on hadow of the Beast 2 on the Amiga. Any tips, cheats, maps or stuff like that would be greatly appreciated. Will send cash back if you can give me a game completing tip eg. Infinite energy or as such!

Also help needed on the following games also on Amiga : Night breed, Total Recall and Robocop 2. Write to Ryan Humphreys (adress above)

Musicians please write to me. I would like help on all aspects and would like to swap sound samples, modules etc. Write to Mat. PO Box 189, Lavington, New South Wales, 2641 Australia or call +61-60-258883.

BEACH Volley, Ninja Spirit, Sword of Aragon, Ant Heads, Colorado, Shadow Warriors, Turtles, Shadow of Beast 2, Operation Stealth, Time Machine, Dragons Lair 2, Corporation, Loom F19 Stealth Fighter, Speedball 2, Cadaver, Final Battle, Dragon Wars, Pirates, Damocles, Castle Master, Last Ninja 2, maniac Mansion Power Monger, Nightshift. If you need help I have complete guides to them. Send a SAE to Mrs. Basye, 21 Southdrift Way, Luton and a cheque/postal Order for £1.50 for Covering rpinting costs.

HELP wanted on level 3 of TMNT for the IBM PC Also send a disk for a free game. Will supply help for Police Quest 1 and 2 and Space Quest. Help wanted on Conquest of Camelot. When at Jerrusalem Waht do you do there? Send all mail to Troy Lea, "Wynlea" Barham Road, Deniliquin 2710 NSW Australia.

HELP I need help on King Quest 5 Heroes Quest 2 (PC version) if any one has hints I will hardly need it. Peter David, electrics Suplies Co, PO Box 211733 Ammah, JORDAN (Middle East).

Has anyone out there got a Commodore Amiga 500 with good games they want to swap for a brand new C64 with some good games. If so contact James Clatworthy The Laurels, Coombeshead Rd, Newton Abbot, Devon. Tel: 0626-332145 any time between weekdays.

INTO CYBER? Get online New Cyber Fanzine/society needs copy writers/artists. Contact. JLH 3 Renton Ave, Guiseley, Leeds, LS20 8EE.

HELP FOR ANYONE wanting to beat Star Command, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Battle Tech. Help wanted in destroying the Russian Destroyers in Iceman. PLUS any one wishing to exchange things on te IBM's should write two Sam Peters PO Box 189 Noresman WA Western Australia 6443.

CHAOS STRIKES BACK.
If any one is having trouble with Chaos Strikes Back then here is a useful Tip. Go to the Demond Chamber go up the stairs and run straight forward into the pit. Now go up the stairs go round corner kill the Rock Monster go to door use Solid Key go down passage (dead end) Stand at wall. Fight the Knights for a bit then step back the dead end has opened Run down passage turn right to face wall go sideays slowly. Press button. Go down the stairs that are revealed to dragons Den kill all the dragons rooms all have secret walls. Get the power towers place over eye on wall. Go through the passage that opens turn left go to the top of. The stairs where you will see the courbum. Stand on the pressure pad step back then run round and grab the courtbum. Now go back up th estairs to the pad you just stood. Now step off the pad onto the open pit (surprise) if the pit in front of you is opening + glossing step forward when shut then right (fast) and there is another piece of courbum. If the pit is just open drop down go upstairs to get courbum. Doing this means you don't have to use the emerald key. In the Demon chamber get the rock monsters on the pressure pad and look round for another surprise!SM Southern, 6 Lebanon House, Berrandale Rd., Bromford Bridge, B'Ham B36 8RP.

Help wanted in Sorcerors get all the girls write to Bacquet 18 Close Dervais 44400 Reze, France.

NOTICE!
Unfortunately, due to piracy groups using the Penpals section, ACE have been forced to discontinue this part of the Readers Page. We apologise to genuine advertisers for any inconvenience.
Any suspicious entries will be forwarded to the Federation of Free Traders who will take action against Pirates.

NOTICE!
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FREEBIES

Enter Pat Winstanley with her first Public Domain column and some words of advice for anyone who wants to become a millionaire by selling PD software...

Over the past few months Mark Smiddy has been doing sterling service on this page bringing news of the best PD around – now it's my turn to lose my footing on a mountain of disks.

First a quick update from last month – the Official STOS PD collection is now being handled by Goodman PDL (address below) NOT Sandra Sharkey in Wigan. If you don't want to wait ages while your order is 'zipped' round the country a couple of times, send it direct to Mike at Goodmans. Apparently Sandra is still receiving quite a few orders which makes for difficulties all round.

RISE AND SHINE

New to the PD scene, but well known for their educational software such as Puzzle Book (under the name Soft Stuff), is Rise Time, which takes its name from the firm's shop in Tonbridge. Now here's an instance of practising the spirit of PD: all discs are sold for just 75p over the counter which merely covers the cost of disk, label and duplication. Well done! Rise Time are currently setting up for mail order and have hundreds of disks available in various categories.

DRAGONS TOWER

ST £2.95
Goodmans PDL

A few months ago Mark looked at this platform game and concluded it was just too hard. Fear not, I have a cheat for you!

If you missed the original review, you play a cute knight collecting keys from inaccessible places. Easy peasy you might think – but you also have to contend with a horde of little purple guards who don't exactly chase you, but simply get in the way. Fighting is out; just brushing against one of these guards with their stubble and studs drains your energy.

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, do we have to put so much effort into locating suitable software? If you're running a library and want to boost your business, phone Steve Cooke on 071 251 6222 for information about editorial coverage in this section.

Graphics are superb and joystick control fairly precise. In fact the only thing that lets it down is the sheer speed and quantity of the baddies.

However try this for a cheat and you'll be well on your way to a hysterical romp – Press P to pause, then [HELP], then type in LEONARDO – hey presto, all your energy back. Mind you, you have to be pretty quick to press P sometimes.

PLAY IT SAFE

Amiga (1 Meg) £3.50
AMOS PDL

This Licenceware title is really for the kids but parents might find their consciences pricked while watching.

Taking in around half a dozen rooms in a house (plus park and garden) each screen shows an area with hazards such as scissors, trailing flexes, polythene bags etc. These have been left behind by a troop of nasties who have invaded the house.

The child's task (or the adult's for that matter) is to identify each hazard in the room by clicking on it with the mouse. Find all the hazards and the nasty who vandalised that room is deported.

Each time the game is run, different hazards appear due to a random factor, and each hazard found either gives a comment or query as to why it is dangerous. Highly recommended.

STARTING YOUR OWN LIBRARY

How do you go about setting up your own PD operation? What should you bear in mind to keep within both the letter and the spirit of the law, and hopefully cover the cost of your time?

Before doing anything else you must realise that running a library takes a tremendous amount of time, energy and commitment. It demands total honesty in your dealings with both programmers and customers. Don't forget that starting any business – PD distribution included – involves certain legal obligations, not just in the way you carry on your business but also in the way you prepare for it (e.g. registration with the Inland Revenue, liability and so forth). For this reason, I should at this point remind readers that this article – as with any piece about starting up a business – is no substitute for your seeking expert professional advice before setting out.

SHAMELESS PLUGS!

Software supplied by the following:
ST: Goodman PDL, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke-on- Trent, ST3 1SW
ST/AMIGA: Rise Time, 19 Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, Kent
AMIGA: AMOS PDL, 25 Park Road, Wigan

Back to PD, there are three methods of distribution in the PD and shareware scene and you should be aware of the differences.

PD consists of programs on which the author has retained copyright but given permission for free distribution as long as the material is not altered in any way. Distributors are not allowed to sell the software at all but they may cover their costs (such as disks, advertising, and so on) by asking a fee.

Whereas PD may be used freely by the recipient for as long as wished, shareware is distributed (sometimes in a cut down form) as an incentive to become a paid-up 'registered' user. If you like and use the program you are expected to send the author a donation. This method falls down unless the user is very honest, since most shareware versions are either complete or near-complete. The dishonest user is the loser in this situation as sending the required donation often brings a software upgrade, a printed manual and plenty of help.

Licenceware is similar to shareware in that the author wants some money but is sold for a slightly higher price than PD with the distributor passing the extra income directly to the author by way of regular royalties. Licenceware is closer to commercial software than PD and is not freely copyable. In fact, passing a copy of licenceware to a friend is PIRACY just as much as passing a copy of the latest chart-topper.

If the very necessary, very hard work doesn't put you off, think also of how you can sell your service in an overcrowded market. Some libraries use PD as a loss leader with which to build up a customer base for the sale of other products, perhaps even commercial software. Others concentrate on a single topic such as AMOS, adventures, or education. Work hard, deal honestly, and be different – and keep your fingers crossed!

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30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London EC1R 3AU

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ACE DIARY

APRIL 1991

7-13 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

Virgin: *Viz* (CPC, £14.99 tape, £19.99 disk). Race game played for laughs between characters from notorious comic. *Judge Dredd* (CPC, Spectrum £14.99 tape, £19.99 disk). Law enforcement in Mega City One.

Spectrum Holobyte: *Flight of the Intruder* (ST, Amiga, £24.99).

Image Works: *Champion of the Raj* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). This one keeps slipping: follow the course of the British Raj in India.

Millennium: *Horror Zombies from the Crypt* (PC £29.99). Spooky goings-on in haunted castle.

US Gold: *Links* - additional courses (PC £TBA). More courses in 256-colour VGA from the same team which brought you *Leaderboard*.

Sunday 7

Monday 8
Clint Eastwood became mayor of Carmel, California, on this day in 1986.

Tuesday 9

Wednesday 10

Thursday 11
1939: Darts were banned in Glasgow pubs for being "too dangerous".

Friday 12
Yuri Gagarin became the first man to fly in space on this day in 1961.

Saturday 13

14-20 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

Virgin: *Spirit of Excalibur* (ST, Amiga £29.99, PC £34.99). Survive against the Saxons in mediaeval tale set in Post-Arthurian Britain. Infocom's *Zork 3* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Completes Infocom's classic trilogy.

Empire: *Mega Traveller* 1 (ST, Amiga £29.99, PC £34.99). Strategy and trading game based on Games Designer Workshop's Mega Traveller.

Ubi Soft: *BAT* (CPC disk £24.99, PC £29.99). Trading, arcade, exploration. *Pro Tennis Tour 2* (ST £24.99, PC £29.99). Sequel to last year's enjoyable tennis sim.

Sunday 14
FA Cup semi-finals: Arsenal vs Tottenham Hotspur at Wembley, 12.00pm; Notts Forest vs West Ham 2.00pm. European Computer Trade Show opens at Islington Business Design Centre. While this event is not open to the general public, rest assured you'll hear plenty about it. This is where many summer titles are previewed, budget release deals sewn up, and game gongs awarded.

Monday 15
Anniversary of the worst-ever disaster at sea: the sinking of the Titanic in 1912.

Tuesday 16

Wednesday 17
National Day, Syria.

Thursday 18

Friday 19

Saturday 20
Snooker: Embassy World Professional Championship opens at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

21-27 APRIL SOFTWARE RELEASES

Virgin: Saracon (C64, £14.99, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Puzzle game.

Microprose: Railroad Tycoon (ST, Amiga £29.99). Build up your empire and get rich quick in the days of the great railway boom.

Electronic Arts: *Hound of Shadow* (PC £29.99). First time on PC for this atmospheric graphic adventure.

Ubi Soft: *Brainblasters* (C64 tape £9.99, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Teasing puzzle game.

Sunday 21
All Formats Computer Fair, National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham. At last, a show for those outside London: lots of software bargains, lots of user groups and PD libraries displaying their wares (contact number: 0225 868100).

Monday 22
SICOB/Comdex exhibition opens in Paris. Big Euro event for everything from games to business.

Tuesday 23
St George's Day - he of dragon-slaying fame. Patron saint not only of England, but also of soldiers and boy scouts.

Wednesday 24

Thursday 25
ANZAC Day in Australia and New Zealand.

Friday 26
MIDI Music Show opens at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London W6. Products, demos and seminars for computer musicians (contact number for organisers: 081-549 3444).

Saturday 27
National Day, Sierra Leone Independence Day, Togo. MIDI Music Show (see above).

28 APRIL - 4 MAY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Virgin: *Magnetic Scrolls Collection Vol 1* (ST, Amiga, PC, Archimedes £34.99). Revised release date for classic Scrolls' oldies *Fish*, *Corruption* and *Guild of Thieves*: same games, new user interface.

Electronic Arts/Interplay: *Dvorak on Typing* (PC £29.99). Not a game but a typing tutor which aims to have you touch typing on Qwerty, Azerty or Dvorak keyboards.

Ubi Soft: *Battle Isle* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Arcade style game much hyped in French press.

Image Works: *Brat* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Cute kid becomes rampaging monster at night in arcade-style hooliganism. *Predator 2* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £14.99 disk, ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Survive the carnage of US drug wars; from the movie of the same name.

Sunday 28
MIDI Music Show (see above).

Monday 29
National Day, Japan (Emperor's birthday).

Tuesday 30
National Day, Netherlands (Official Birthday of Queen Beatrix). Reports of a fire at a reactor in the nuclear power station at Chernobyl were broadcast on this day in 1986.

MAY

Wednesday 1
European Football Championship: Turkey vs England in Turkey; San Marino vs Scotland; Ireland vs Poland in Dublin; N Ireland vs Faroe Islands in Belfast.

Thursday 2

Friday 3

Saturday 4

5 - 11 MAY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Empire: *Wrath of the Demon* (CD-TV £TBA). Empire's bid to be first with finished CD-TV product; graphically-led quest and exploration game.

Microprose: *Gunship 2000* (PC £34.99). Sequel and update to the highly regarded Gunship.

Ubi Soft: *Music Master* (ST, Amiga, PC £TBA). Music composition package: ST and PC versions come complete with the MV16 sound cartridge, as used in Ubi Soft's BAT (see above).

Sunday 5

Monday 6
Bank Holiday UK. 1954: the first sub-four-minute mile was run by Roger Bannister at the Iffley Road track in Oxford.

Tuesday 7

Wednesday 8
Football: UEFA Cup final, first leg.

Thursday 9
National Day, Czechoslovakia

Friday 10
Spring Computer Shopper Show opens at Alexandra Palace, London N22. New products, old ones at bargain prices and lots of discounted computer accessories (contact number 081-868 4466).

Saturday 11
National Day, Laos Spring Computer Shopper Show (see above)

THE BLITTER END

TETRIS TOOBIN'

Playing Tetris on the Game Boy can be bad for your image, I discovered the other day. Having developed a habit of dashing off a few games on the tube journey into work, I found myself recently on a crowded tube and, to my horror, approaching my all time high score as the train approached my destination.

As anyone who's played Tetris will know, a number of biological changes begin to take effect when the high score threshold is reached. The neck muscles begin to bulge ever so slightly; the veins on the forehead begin to pulsate; sweat runs down the fevered brow; there are uncontrollable muscular spasms as you attempt to slip the little devils into the appropriate positions; every now and then, when you make a particularly stupid move, the tortured sub-conscious forces a loud groan of despair through the puckered, quivering lips.

On this particular occasion, these changes were manifesting themselves on yours truly to a quite unprecedented degree. This was no mean high score threshold – this was the two hundred thousand mark I'd been struggling for days to pass. And, on this occasion, I blew it completely at around 185K.

At this point I involuntarily let out a yelp of anguish and, simultaneously, became aware of two things. First, my fellow passengers had all drawn back about three feet and were looking at me with – well, frankly, terror is the only word I can think of. Terror blended with total contempt and revulsion. If ever a sicko had proved beyond doubt that games were evil and that gamesters were only one degree removed from violent, brainless zombies, I – this was written plainly on their faces – was that sicko.

At the same time I noticed that the train was not only in my station, but that the doors were about to close. Yes, there was only one thing for it. Having committed the unpardonable sin of letting myself go completely to pieces in public, I was now going to have to commit an even worse sin – I was going to have to 'Leave The Tube In An Uncontrolled And Impetuous Manner', which I did – knocking people out of the way as I barged violently through to the platform. It was, I fancy, an old lady that I noticed out of the corner of my eye, pitching backwards into the carriage, her head coming into sharp contact with one of the upright poles. Ah well...

I now travel to work by bus. And I only play Tetris in private. Let this be a lesson to all of you.

*

I am delighted to announce that I have found a use for my modem. You know – those things that every computer enthusiast buys at some time or another, tempted by the prospect of exciting multi-user games and enlightened on-line communication with young female gamesters in the Philippines. Instead, what you get is a stratospheric phone bill and the 'privilege' of eavesdropping as various computer freaks discuss the advantages of UNIX over anything used by normal, sensible people.

Now, however, my modem SAVES me around £150 a year AND improves the quality of my life. I'm referring, of course, to BT's scandalous practise of charging people 43p for the privilege of telling them how to spend more money with BT – the Directory Enquiries service, in other words.

However, with my modem and my new password (available without charge from BT) I can now get as many numbers as I want, whenever I want, for around 13p per number at peak rates and only 6p per number at cheap rate. Compare that with 22.5p – the minimum charge per number using DE, which assumes that you get two numbers every time you phone, otherwise you'll be paying 43p per number.

Power users can splash out £2200 for a CD-ROM, which includes every number in the country EXCEPT those in Hull. Which is a pity, because there are a lot of nice people in Hull – and they must be pretty intelligent too, because they've had an independent phone network there since the year dot.

Unfortunately I can't tell you how to get either of these services because I've lost the bit of paper on which I jotted down the contact details of the BT department responsible. It took me a day to find those out and I simply can't face the anguish of doing it all over again. And it doesn't appear to be on the database. ***Blit Blit!***

NO CHECK, MATE

HiTech have outdone themselves with the Game Boy version of The Chessmaster. This wily title has invented some rules of its own, ensuring that even the staunchest grandmaster is reduced to tears. Judging by the occasional antics of our copy, these include:

- When in danger of checkmate, freeze the game
- Do not allow your opponent to castle if he needs to
- Invent illegal moves when necessary.

Let us know if you've had similar problems...

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

The next issue of ACE hits the streets on July 8th – and just look at what you'll get!

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